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Alice Stanley, and other stories

Anna Maria Hall



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Marmaduke Mathews



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1908



By

MRS. S. C. HALL,

Author of "Nelly Nowlan," "The Way of the World," &c.



LONDON:

T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1868.



CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. ALICE STANLEY,	7
II. THE FISHERMAN,	25
III. THE SOLDIER'S WIFE,	35
IV. SEVEN AND SEVENTEEN,	42
V. THE ROSE OF PENNOCK DALE,	60
VI. THE MOUNTAIN DAISY,	75
VII. THE ANXIOUS WIFE,	87
VIII. WE'LL SEE ABOUT IT,	100
IX. THE STORY OF EDWIN, THE EXILE OF DEIRA,	108





I.

Alice Stanley.

THERE is an ancient manor-house in a certain English county, where I have spent many days; yet the place, and its master, and its amusements, resemble more the things we read of in old books than matters to be met with in modern habitations.

It is impossible to see Mr. Stanley without an involuntary feeling of respect; his voice, one of the most unerring tests of high breeding, confirms the impression; and his well-chosen words, always few in number, convey his ideas so distinctly, that you know at once exactly what he desires you should know, and no more. He never was flatly contradicted in his life but once; it was by an American, and, ever since, no one has cared to mention America in his presence. Not that he was ever guilty of flying into a passion. Mrs. Brande, the venerable housekeeper, who has lived (to quote her own quaint words) "in his honour's service half a century and two years," told me she never heard him raise his voice. "Madam," quoth Mrs. Brande, "his honour never did; when he is angry, he only

looks, and remains silent. I never saw any one who could abide that look *twice*. It's dangerous, madam—the lightning without the thunder; it's the only warning he ever gives; but no servant bides it twice."

You would never dream of calling Stanley Pleasaunce a "Liberty Hall;" and yet I have seen people happy there; perhaps because more orderly than at some of those new-fashioned "Liberty Halls," where the host and hostess meet you in the drawing-room, for the first time in the day, ten minutes before dinner, and consider they have performed all the rites of hospitality when they inquire, "How have you spent the morning?"

There are a Bible and a timepiece in every room at Stanley Pleasaunce; and a variety of bells are rung at regular hours, or, I should rather say, minutes, to call to prayers, breakfast, and so on; and the head and chief of all this punctuality is the old gentleman himself. Everything in and about the house may be described by the term "punctuality;" but, though the meeting and eating hours are the same all the year round, the intermediate hours are filled up in many varied ways.

Mr. Stanley has numbered more than seventy years; yet his politeness is perfection. From being a strict lover of forms, his first attentions are paid to those whose positions in society demand them; but he has the happiest manner of preventing his humbler guests from feeling, or even perceiving, that the slightest dif-

ference exists in the circumstances of any partaker of the hospitality of Stanley Pleasaunce.

His walls are hung with tapestry, or old pictures ; his hall, noble and lofty in its proportions, is a perfect museum of old English implements of sport and war ; stag-hounds and a pair of genuine English mastiffs act as sentinels at the porch ; and his stud is unrivalled. He keeps a falconer, and the hawks are the best trained in England. He loves to meet with a guest well read in black-letter lore, familiar with Dame Juliana Berners' "Bokys of Hawkinge and Hunting," and learned in all the "Properties and Medecynes that are necessary to be kept." To him he will dilate, with stately eloquence, on the good old days, when a certain Marmaduke Stanley wooed Geraldine Aylmer, each with hawk in hand, as they rode forth from the gay Pleasaunce on a radiant summer morning ; and he will tell you how Marmaduke won his suit by flying his hawk against Geraldine's, and gaining the first "cast." A painting of the notable event hangs in the old oak dining-room, and vividly illustrates the story of Marmaduke's wager.

But Mr. Stanley does not neglect his chivalrous sports. His preserves are well filled with game ; and, conceiving it to be his duty to provide for the amusement of "his people," as he is old-fashioned enough to call and consider his tenants, the May-pole is as carefully preserved as his Dutch flower-garden, the village bowling-green as his park, and the wicket-ground is as

clearly a matter of interest to the lord of the manor as to the peasants. He loves to keep up old customs; has a mistletoe hung in the hall, an ox roasted whole, and a hogshead of "humming beer" broached for the entertainment of the villagers at Christmas, and turns the two first couple to the tune of "Sir Roger de Coverley," at the accustomed ball on New-Year's eve, then resumes his seat—a carved high-backed chair, raised by a single step above all others—and looks gravely on at the festivities.

It would be difficult to determine why Mr. Stanley sees so much company, and why he gives himself so much trouble, which every one says yields him no pleasure. The society of the distinguished, whether for rank or talent; the compliments of the polite; nay, the very blessings of the poor, the widow and the fatherless, on whom he is ever conferring benefits, do not reach, much less warm, his heart.

If there needed proof how little wealth, station, and high birth have to do with happiness, the master of Stanley Pleasaunce would be the example of all others I should select, to show the incompetence of what is most coveted to yield the rich reward of our restless ambition and unending toil.

It is said that George IV. was so much charmed by the manner and appearance of Mr. Stanley, that he caused it to be communicated to him that, if he pleased, he might be elevated to the peerage.

"I thank his majesty," answered the gentleman ;
"but I have no son."

"But, sir," replied the nobleman who conveyed the gracious message, "you have a nephew."

A deep shadow passed over Mr. Stanley's face ; and, lest his voice should betray any emotion, he paused before he answered : "One, sir, unworthy to bear my name, much less to be honoured by his majesty."

Mr. Stanley, though Providence had crushed his ambition by denying him children by his first marriage, and ordaining that, during the lifetime of his third wife, he should follow two noble boys to their grave, had still a child of his second marriage to watch over and companion his old age, though she knew she had not the power to render it happy.

But if Alice Stanley had not the power of making her father happy ; if the feeling that his principal estate was so strictly entailed that it must go to the nephew, whom, justly or unjustly, he hated with a bitterness that lent its flavour to every portion of his existence, Alice Stanley both possessed and exercised the power of cheering every other heart and brightening every other eye. She had passed the age when women are considered either young or handsome ; the latter, strictly speaking, she had never been ; yet, after spending a few hours in her society, every one declared they had forgotten her features in her fascination.

Although her mother's noble fortune had been settled

upon her, and it was well known that her father had used every method which law could devise to impoverish the entail and make his daughter passing rich, at forty, Alice Stanley, beloved, blessed, and endowed with the highest personal as well as mental accomplishments,—at forty, Alice Stanley was unmarried: there could be no doubt of her preferring to remain so; and there was a dignified composure in her manner, an avoidance of the dress and habits of youth, a resigning herself, long before most women consider “the time” arrived for such resignation, to the customs of elder life, which proved, more than words could prove, that Alice Stanley would neither be wooed nor won.

It could not be supposed that this was the result of apathy, or a want of the affections of our nature; if nothing seemed to touch her father’s heart, everything appeared to vibrate upon hers. It was a treat to see her leaving the village church on a Sunday afternoon; her father always accompanied her, or rather she accompanied him, on the Sabbath morning. The Stanleys went regularly to church, from time immemorial, in a carriage drawn by four greys, and were invariably seated in the old family pew before the church bell had finished ringing; but Mr. Stanley would have considered it as wrong to go in the afternoon as it was right to go in the morning. He held it, that women, to whom every courtesy should be shown, even to the standing up when a lady went in or out of a room,

were, for all that, not of sufficient importance to make their going or not going to afternoon prayers a matter of consequence: so he permitted his daughter to do as she pleased; and it was a treat to see her leaving the village church; to note the shrivelled hands lifted in silent or half-uttered prayers for the blessing of their lives; to watch the children crowding round her path, to catch the smiles she so willingly exchanged for theirs; and to listen to the words of kindness, consolation, or advice, which fell from lips that were as eloquent as her father's were silent.

In the stately receptions in which Mr. Stanley's desires, rather than his words, had required that she should bear so distinguished a part, she managed to combine the nameless and numberless formalities of the old school with the ease of the new; it was not that she seemed to do or say a great deal, but, if absent from illness or any other cause, something, the most important of all things, was immediately discovered to be wanting, not by one person, but by all.

"I have served many ladies in my time—and seen many," said the old housekeeper, one day, in a confidential tone, and yet one of aged exultation. "I was own maid to the first Mrs. Stanley; a lovely creature *she* was, and well the master loved her, until, when they had been three or four years married, finding she had no children, his love cooled, and she soon died. He married, at the end of a year and a day, just such

a lady as Miss Stanley was—no matter how long ago—only more gay like; and the birth of her daughter and her own death were within one hour of each other. My master met me at the door, just as all was over. ‘She is in heaven, sir!’ I whispered; he drew back, covered his face with his hands one minute, and then inquired, ‘And the child?’—‘A sweet daughter, sir,’ I said. ‘Lost her life for a daughter!’ muttered my master, stalking away like a shadow; and that was the sting, poor gentleman—a daughter! Then there was another wife, self-willed, and a beauty; she left him two noble boys, and though, when my master followed the last of them to his grave, he was only five and thirty, he said, ‘I am too old, I will marry no more; there is a curse over the inheritance.’ But of these three ladies, and of all that ever came to and went from this house, there never was any like Miss Stanley; there are none like her, and there never will be!”

“What a pity she never married!” was the natural observation.

“A pity!—ay, it is indeed a pity; it is such as she who ought to be wives and mothers. She’ll never marry now, she knows better; it’s a cast of a die any time—but it’s no business of mine. She’s too good for—an angel even!” quoth the old housekeeper, as she hobbled off; for the next day was Miss Stanley’s birthday, and, of course, to be kept with all the pomp

which evidently the lady would not have herself bestowed upon it.

The morning was ushered in by the ringing of bells, and Mr. Stanley had, as usual, invited a large party, to do honour to the occasion. "It was an old family custom," he said, "and should never be neglected."

The guests who were staying in the house observed that the lady was not in her usual—one could not exactly say "spirits," for she was always calm and even—but her manner was abstracted, and she, always so ready to return the slightest courtesy, was silent, even to sadness. The day passed on—the dinner in the hall was perfect. The venerable man who proposed Miss Stanley's health had been her father's friend—that is, they assimilated in politics and religion, and all county matters—for fifty years; and when Mr. Stanley returned thanks, he spoke so well, and looked so handsome, that few would have believed he was in the seventy-second year of his age.

At the proper time the visitors withdrew, and the old man and his daughter stood side by side, alone in the stately drawing-room.

"Are you very much fatigued, dear father?" inquired Alice, tenderly winding her arm within his.

"No, my dear, not at all, particularly as I have observed that you have something to say to me."

"Thank you, dear father," she answered, "I shall not, I hope, detain you long; but the servants want to

put out the lights. Will you go to your library or dressing-room?"

Mr. Stanley led the way to the library, and, having placed a chair for his daughter, seated himself opposite to her, waiting with well-bred attention for her words.

"You will bear with me, dear father, will you?" she inquired, or rather whispered, while her frail, slender frame trembled with emotion. "You will bear with me, will you not?"

"I have never had anything to bear," replied the old gentleman most truly. "You never contradicted me in your life; you never angered me but once—never *but once*, Alice, *never but once*! I do not think you would do it a SECOND TIME."

"God knows I would not!—father, but you will bear with *me*?"

Mr. Stanley was not a father either to caress or be caressed, yet Alice pushed an ottoman close to his feet, and crouched rather than sat down upon it, as if she had been a little child. Her dress, of the richest silver-grey satin, fell in massive folds around her; her hair, which was streaked with white, was partially concealed by a dark velvet head-dress. She had endeavoured to conceal her agitation, but, as she drew closer, her father perceived that her features were almost convulsed; and she trembled so violently, that she grasped the arm of the chair upon which he sat with both her hands, as if that would impart strength to her quivering frame.

"Alice, my child!" exclaimed her father quickly, "you are ill; I never saw you thus before!" He would have rung the bell, but she prevented him by her gestures; and when she had regained her self-possession, so as to enable her to speak again, she said, "If you only say you will bear with and hear all I have to say, I shall be well presently."

"I will, Alice, I will; my own, patient, gentle child," answered the old man; and while he spoke, he fondled her head, passing his hand over the silken and silvered hair. She seized it, and kissed it eagerly.

"Thank God, my dear father, for all your kindness! My birth and my whole course of life have been a disappointment to you—I know that; but you love me, my own dear father, I know you do."

"Alice," answered Mr. Stanley, "that I wished for a son, when divine will thought fit to send me a daughter, I do not deny; that afterwards, when you were again my *only one*, I desired to see you wedded to him who bears our name, but whose delight has been to mar my dearest wishes, and who dared to spurn the alliance which the highest coveted—when I was thus insulted through my child, I—but that is past"

The old gentleman paused: he had never in his long life permitted his daughter to perceive that he was much moved by any occurrence; while he spoke, he did not venture to look at her, but kept his eyes fixed upon

some object at the other end of the room. She was unconscious of this, having covered her face with her hands. By a strong effort, Mr. Stanley conquered the evidence of his feelings, and continued, "You refused the only revenge which, as a woman, was in your power—you would not marry the man it would have galled your cousin to see you married to—instead of this you paled and pined."

"Father!" interrupted Miss Stanley, removing her hands, and gazing steadily at her proud father, "do me not injustice. That I loved my cousin beyond all power to tell, is true. When, after cherishing from girlhood the belief that he loved me, I found he loved another—when he insulted me by the parade of her most wonderful and rare beauty, I loved him still. When, wrought by bitter broils between you and him, he scornfully spurned his cousin, she still loved him. Do not look so sternly on me, father!" said Alice, as she rose, half-kneeling, from her lowly seat; "I have been punished for that love. I angered you by refusing to wed in deep revenge, as you truly say, one whom it would have galled my cousin into madness to see me married to. I loathed the man—you were angered at this. I paled, it is true—revenge and love struggling within the heart of a young girl were enough to make her pale; but though love was stronger than revenge, or the dread of your displeasure, Alice Stanley did not *pine*."

She pushed back the hair which had escaped from its confinement, and walked rapidly up and down the room. Again her father became alarmed either for her life or reason, and did not venture to speak. At last, she resumed her seat, and, much calmed, said: "I cannot think why what occurred full twenty years ago should so unnerve me now. Yet, though the flesh shrinks and the colour fades, and the poor toil-worn frame aches for the quiet of the grave, the springs of love are stronger in some hearts than those of life."

"Not in yours, I hope," said her father. There was something approaching to sarcasm in the tone of his voice which made her shudder; but the cause she had to plead gave her strength, and she continued:—

"My cousin married—"

"He did," said Mr. Stanley; "he married—and had no children. There was *great* comfort in that—he had no children—"

"His wife died," continued Miss Stanley, as if she had not noted her father's interruption.

"When?—where?" inquired the old gentleman—"and how did you know anything about him, when I have not heard for years?"

"You would *not* hear, my father," she answered; "you would not hear; his imprudence impoverished him."

A thought, the most painful that could be formed by such a man, suddenly crossed Mr. Stanley's mind;

but, though it changed the expression of his countenance, he did not give it words.

"It was disgraceful," Miss Stanley said, "for your nephew, your future heir, to need aid from strangers."

"Go on," said Mr. Stanley.

"You have been most liberal to me, father."

"I pray you to go on—and quickly," muttered the old gentleman.

"I transmitted him money through a bank, without his knowing who it came from."

"Oh, you did!—but his wife was dead; and he in time found out, of course, and is most grateful."

"The fair and beautiful, whom the whole world admired, was dead; but, a few months after her death, he married again."

"And you knew this?"

"Of course, I did. He married a young English lady—"

"Rascal as he was, I am glad he did not wed a foreigner," thought Mr. Stanley.

"He married, and has left one child—a boy."

"Alice," inquired her father, "what do you mean by left? You said he has left one child—a boy—what do you mean by *left*?"

"Need I tell you—*must* I tell you, my dear father," she replied, "the dull, cold words—he is dead! I knew it only this morning."

"Dead!—dead!" repeated the proud old man.

"Why, he was but a boy. The Stanleys live to a great age,—but he was unworthy of the name—turbulent, self-willed, proud, selfish."

"My father, if any living have a right to heap heaviness upon his grave, it is I—I—he was my blight. And yet *he* could no more love me than I could love another; and out of your resolve that we should wed sprung all this whirlwind of sorrow. But for it, he would have been to you as a son; he *was* the child of your beloved brother, and you remember he has not died childless."

"And what is *that* to me?" inquired the old man, with more than his usual sternness.

"Much!—much! In a few years, when our days are numbered, that boy must be here—master of this house, of the Stanley entailed estates. I ask you to bear with me," she said, grasping both her father's hands in hers, and kneeling at his feet: "God grant it may be many years!—but it *must* be in the end. Let us teach him, by care and tenderness, to look for it as a loss, and not a blessing—let us make him our own by loving care. He can hardly remember his father; and his mother now is a fair young girl, who loved and tended him—loved in sorrow and in sickness; for *that* I love her—"

"FOR *THAT* YOU LOVE HER!" repeated the old man, looking down upon the weeping face that was upturned to him—"for *that*!"

"Oh yes, dear father. Let her be to me a sister—

let *her* know you as you really are! Now that the cause of all your seeming coldness is in the silent grave, forgive him; and to his child—oh, be to him what you have been to me!” She sobbed bitterly. “His father,” continued this unchanging woman, “is dearer to me in his lone, foreign grave than all the world besides, save only you; it is no sin to say it now.”

“Alice,” said Mr. Stanley, his coldness, his pride, his very hatred of his nephew yielding to an influence so new and so powerful, “do you remember clearly and distinctly *ALL* the past? Do you remember that Edward Stanley said that he loathed your very name? that he would go to his grave by his own hand rather than take yours in marriage?”

“Yes,” she answered, “I remember it well; it was burnt into my heart and brain. His proud and restless mind would not be commanded either by his father or his uncle; he would not yield to interest; for *that* at least I honoured him: but,” she added, in a trembling voice, “it would not have been so had he not loved elsewhere. I can understand what it is to have a marriage forced upon one whose heart and soul are given to another; and upon one with such proud, hot blood as Stanley’s rushing through his veins! It was hard for me to bear, but it was natural for him to feel. It is now a story of the past, a lesson in life, a dream, whose strongest features can never be forgotten.”

“And were you not jealous and indignant?” inquired

her father, for the first time questioning her upon the subject.

"He did not know I loved him," she replied. "And few men, I believe, understand either the height or the depth of woman's love, shut up, as it is, as the world and the world's Maker ordain that it should be, in their seared and silent hearts. I do not think I was jealous of his wife. She was a bright, triumphant beauty. Long, long before she died, I mingled her name with his in my prayers."

"And if she had lived, and been the mother of this boy you plead for, could you have entreated for her as you do now for her successor?" persisted Mr. Stanley.

"I would!" answered his daughter. "I should have done so then, perhaps, with some pain; but now I love them both. May they not come, father? Will you not receive the boy? *He* has never—never angered you!"

The old man raised her to his bosom; and then, holding her from him, gazed into her face. "I will ask her no more questions," he thought; "it is useless! I will not remind her that, if I loved this boy, it might lessen her inheritance. No common interests have power over her." "My noble, faithful child," he said aloud, "I bless God that I have known you at last. Do as it seems best to you. Bring the boy here. When *you* have forgiven, *I* ought. It is very, very strange, and hard—hard to understand a woman's love!"

The child and his mother have been now nearly three years at Stanley Pleasaunce; and Alice, dear Alice Stanley, looks younger and happier than she did for the last twenty years of her life. The old gentleman's figure and deportment are as stately as ever. But his mind is failing, or changed—very much changed—or you could hardly fancy him watching with so much interest his little nephew's gambols; pushing his ball along with the end of his stately, gold-headed cane, or twisting the long curls of fair Saxon hair round his white but attenuated fingers; while the old housekeeper hobbles up and down after the young gentleman, lest the sun should be too hot or the wind too cold, muttering, "It's all along of Miss Stanley, it's all her doings. I always said there never was any one like her."





II.

The Fisherman.

BUT was as calm an evening as ever came from heaven,—the sky and the earth were as tranquil, as if no storm from the one had ever disturbed the repose of the other ; and even the ocean—that great highway of the world—lay as gentle as if its bosom had never betrayed,—as if no traveller had ever sunk to death in its embrace. The sun had gone down, and the pensive twilight would have reigned over nature, but for the moon, which rose in her full-orbed beauty, the queen of an illimitable world, to smile upon the goodly things of ours, and to give a radiance and a glory to all she shone upon. It was an hour and a scene that led the soul to the contemplation of Him who never ceases to watch over the works he has made, and whose protecting care displays itself alike upon the solid land and the trackless wastes of the deceitful sea.

On the western coast of the county of Devon, which has been termed, and, it may be added, justly, “The Garden of England,” upon such an evening, a group had

assembled around one of the fisherman's cottages. The habitation was built in the true style of the olden time, when comfort was the principal object of the projector. At either side of the door were scattered the lines and nets and baskets that betokened the calling of the owner, and the fisherman was taking his farewell for the night, of his happy, loving family, who were bidding him "God speed" on his voyage. A fine old man was leaning his arms on the railing, and talking to an interesting girl whose hand lay upon the shoulder of a younger sister. The stout fisherman, dressed in his rough jerkin, and large boots that reached far above the knees, was in the act of kissing a little cherub, who seemed half terrified at being elevated so high as the father's lips; while the wife and mother, with her infant nursling on her lap, was looking anxiously upon her husband as she breathed the parting blessing, and the prayer for his safe return. A little boy, the miniature of his father in countenance and in dress, bearing a huge boat-cloak across his shoulders, and the lantern that was to give light when the moon departed, completed the group,—if we except a noble Newfoundland dog, some steps in advance of the party, watching for the nod to command his march to a kind of pier where the fisherman and his boy were to embark.

"Good luck, good luck!" exclaimed the old man.

"Good luck, and safe home again, John; ye want no more but God's blessing, and that ye may have for ask-

ing ; but ye may as well take mine too,—God bless ye, and good-bye to ye.”

The blessing was heartily echoed by his kind partner and his children, and, whistling as he went, with his boat-hook on his shoulder, his dog Neptune before, and his boy following, he trudged along to the beach.

With the earliest dawn of morning the fisherman's family were astir ; the elder girl was busily arranging their little parlour, while the younger was preparing the breakfast table, and the mother spreading before the fire the clothes of her husband and her boy. An hour passed, and she grew somewhat uneasy that he had remained abroad beyond the usual period of his return. Another hour had elapsed, when she said to her father, “Father, go out to the hillock and try if you can see his sail upon the water ; he seldoms stays out so long when the sea is calm and the weather fair ; my little boy too was not quite well last night, and this alone should have hastened him home.”

The old man went forth, and one by one his grandchildren followed him, until the mother was left alone, rocking the cradle of her unconscious babe. After the lapse of another hour, her daughter entered with news that a neighbour had spoken to her father in the night, and that he would certainly be soon home.

“God grant it !” said she, and she spoke in a tone of deep anxiety,—“He never was away so long but once, and that was when he saved the crew of the ship *Mary* ;

and then the whirl of the sinking vessel had well-nigh made his grave."

Again she stirred the fire, again arranged the clothes before it, and poured some hot water into the tea-cups. Still the breakfast remained untouched.

The sun was now soaring to his meridian height, when once more the family assembled in their humble dwelling ; the prop of the whole was yet wanting. They sat down to a cheerless meal, the seats at either side of the wife remaining vacant. The old man was the only individual who appeared to anticipate no evil ; but he hastily finished his breakfast and went forth.

The noon was already passing, and the sun had already given tokens of the glory of his departure, when the fisherman's wife, having lulled her infant asleep, went herself to the hill that commanded an extensive view of the wide-spread ocean. All the little household soon assembled on the spot, but no boat was seen upon the waters,—nothing that could give hope except the aspect of the waves which looked too placid to be dangerous

Their deep dread was no longer concealed ; and while the old man paced to and fro, looking earnestly at brief intervals over the lonely sea, the mother and the daughter were sobbing audibly.

"Fearless let him be whose trust is in God !" exclaimed the father. The sentence was uttered involuntarily, but it had its effect.

"Ay," said the mother, "he always trusted in God, and God will not forsake him now."

"Do you remember, Jane," continued the old man, "how often Providence was with me, amid the storm and the wreck, when help from man was far off, and would have been useless if near?"

And they cheered and encouraged one another to hope the best,—but to submit to the decree of heaven, whether it came as the gentle dew to nourish, or as the heavy rain to oppress. From that hillock which overlooked the ocean, ascended their mingled prayers that God would not leave them desolate.

The fisherman—the object of their hopes and fears—had been very successful during the night, when at day-break, as he was preparing to return home, he remembered his promise to bring with him some sea-weed to manure the potato plot behind his cottage. He was then close to rocks which were only discernible at low water; he pulled for them, jumped on shore, fastened the painter of his boat to a jutting part of a cliff, and took his boat-hook with him. He collected a sufficient quantity of the weed, but in his eagerness to obtain it, had wandered from the landing-place, when he heard his boy loudly hallooing and exclaiming that the painter was loose. He rushed instantly towards the boat, which was then several yards off; the boy was vainly endeavouring to use both the oars, and Neptune, the faithful dog, was running back-

ward and forward, howling fearfully, as if conscious of his master's danger, at one moment about to plunge into the waves to join him, and the next licking the face and hands of the child, as if he foresaw that for him his protection would be most needed.

The fisherman perceived at once the desperate nature of his situation ; the tide he knew was coming in rapidly, and his hope of escape was at an end, when he perceived that his boy, in an effort to use the oars, had let one of them fall overboard. "Father, father," exclaimed the poor lad, "what shall I do?"—the boat was at this moment so distant that his distracted parent could scarcely hear the words, but he called out to him as loud as he could to trust in God, the father of the fatherless. He then stood resigned to the fate which he felt awaited him, and watched the drifting boat that bore the child in peril from the fatal rocks. He had offered up a brief prayer to the throne of mercy, when in an instant, a light broke upon his mind. "Good God!" he exclaimed, "I may yet be saved." With the energy of hope battling with despair, he collected all the stones around him, and heaped them rapidly upon the highest ledge of rock ; it was indeed wonderful how he could have gathered so many in so short a time ; but the Almighty gave strength to his arm, and he was labouring not for life merely, but for beings still dearer to him. The tide came on, on, on, and soon obliged him to abandon his work. He then mounted the pile

he had heaped, planted his boat-hook firmly in one of the crevices of the cliff, and prepared to struggle for existence ; but his heart failed him, when he considered how slight was the possibility that the waters would not rise above his head. Still, he determined to do all he could to preserve life. The waves were not rough, and the boat-hook supported him.

The awful moment rapidly approached ; the water had reached his knees ; but he stood firmly, and prayed that he might be preserved. On, on, on, it came, slowly and gently, but more fearfully than if it had raged around its destined prey,—soon it reached his waist, and he then prayed that it might go no higher. On, on, on, it came, and his shoulders were covered ;—hope died within him, and he thought of himself no longer, but of those who were so dear to him—his wife, his children, and his father—it was for blessings on them that he then implored Heaven. Still on, on, it came, and he was forced to raise his head to keep as long as possible from death ; his reason was almost gone, his breath grew feeble, his limbs chill ; he panted and his prayers became almost gurgling murmurs. The blood rushed to his head ; his eye-balls glared as if they would start from their sockets. He closed them with an effort, and thought for the last time on the home that would be soon so wretched ! Horrible images were before him—each swell of the wave seemed as if the fiends were forcing him downward, and the

cry of the sea-bird was like the yells over their victim. He was gasping, choking, for he had not strength to keep his head above the waves, every moment it was plashing upon them, and each convulsive start that followed only aroused him to the consciousness, if consciousness it could be called, that the next plunge would be his last.

Merciful powers!—at the very moment, when the strength and spirit of a man had left him, and the cold shudder of death had come on, he felt that the tide rose no higher. His eyes opened, closed, and a fearful laugh troubled the waters! They eddied in his throat, and the bubbles floated around his lips—but they rose no higher—that he knew—again and again his bosom heaved with a deep sob, as he drew in his breath, and gave it forth anew in agony. A minute had passed since the salt sea touched his lips;—this was impossible if the tide still flowed; he could reason so much. He opened his eyes, and faintly murmured forth—“O God, be merciful.”—The flow of the ocean had indeed ceased; there he still stood motionless; but praying and weeping—thinking of his beloved home, and hoping that his place there might not be for ever vacant. The waters in a short time subsided, and he was enabled to stretch his chill limbs, and then to warm them by exercise. Soon, the rock was left dry as before, and the fisherman knelt down upon that desolate spot among the billows—hid his face in his

hands, and praised and blessed his Creator—his Preserver !

Oh, it was the well-known bark of his faithful dog that he heard above the waves ; in another moment the creature was licking his pale cheek. He was saved—he was saved—for his own boat had touched the shore, and his own boy was in his arms ! He had been drifted to the land, and had easily found those who rowed hard for the chance of saving his father's life.

“ Now homeward, homeward ! ” he exclaimed.

“ Homeward, homeward ! ” echoed the child, and Neptune jumped and barked at the wolcome sound.

The fisherman's family were still supplicating Providence upon the hillock that overlooked the deep, when the old man started from his knees, and exclaimed, “ We are heard ! there is a speck upon the distant waters.”

“ Where, where ? ” was echoed by the group ; and he pointed out what he hoped to be the absent boat. They eagerly strained their eyes, but could see nothing. In a few minutes, however, all perceived a sail ; still it was impossible to tell the direction in which its course lay.

Then was the agony of suspense ; it continued, however, but for a short time ; a boat was evidently advancing towards the shore ; in a few minutes, they could clearly perceive a man at the bow, waving his hat above his head, and soon after the well-known bark

of Neptune was borne to them by the breeze. The family rushed to the extremity of the rude pier, and the loud huzza of the fisherman was answered by the "welcome, welcome" of his father, and the almost inarticulate "thank God" of his wife.

And now all was joy and happiness in the cottage, where there had been so much wretchedness; the fisherman, his boy, and his dog, were safe from the perils of the great deep; but he would return no answer to the many questions, as to what had detained him so long beyond the usual hour of his return—"Wait, my wife," said he, "until we have dressed and refreshed ourselves, and you shall know all; but before we do either, let us bless God for his mercy, for out of great danger hath he preserved me." •

Never was there a more sincere or more earnest prayer offered up to the Giver of all goodness, than ascended from that humble dwelling. And when the fisherman had told his tale, how fervently did they all repeat the words that had given them so much consolation in the morning,—

"Fearless let him be whose trust is in his God!"





III.

The Soldier's Wife.

IT is now many years since the first battalion of the 17th Regiment of Foot, under orders to embark for India,—that far distant land, where so many of our brave countrymen have fallen victims to the climate, and where so few have slept in what soldiers call “the bed of glory,”—were assembled in the barrack-yard of Chatham, to be inspected previously to their passing on board the transports, which lay moored in the Downs.

It was scarcely day-break, when the merry drum and fife were heard over all parts of the town, and the soldiers were seen sallying forth from their quarters, to join the ranks ; with their bright firelocks on their shoulders, and the knapsacks and canteens fastened to their backs by belts as white as snow. Each soldier was accompanied by some friend or acquaintance,—or by some individual, with a dearer title to his regard than either ; and there was a strange and sometimes a whimsical mingling of weeping and laughter among the assembled groups.

The second battalion was to remain in England, and

the greater portion of the division were present to bid farewell to their old companions in arms. But among the husbands and wives, uncertainty as to their destiny prevailed—for the lots were yet to be drawn—the lots that were to decide which of the women should accompany the regiment, and which should remain behind. Ten of each company were to be taken, and chance was to be the only arbiter. Without noticing what passed elsewhere, I confined my attention to that company which was commanded by my friend Captain Loden, a brave and excellent officer, who, I am sure, has no more than myself forgotten the scene to which I refer.

The women had gathered round the flag-serjeant, who held the lots in his cap—ten of them marked "*to go*"—and all the others, containing the fatal words "*to remain*." It was a moment of dreadful suspense, and never have I seen the extreme of anxiety so powerfully depicted in the countenances of human beings as in the features of each of the soldiers' wives who composed that group. One advanced and drew her ticket; it was against her, and she retreated sobbing. Another, she succeeded; and, giving a loud huzza, ran off to the distant ranks to embrace her husband. A third came forward with hesitating step; tears were already chasing each other down her cheeks, and there was an unnatural paleness on her interesting and youthful countenance. She put her small hand into the serjeant's cap, and I saw by the rise and fall of her bosom, even more than

her looks revealed. She unrolled the paper, looked upon it, and with a deep groan, fell back and fainted. So intense was the anxiety of every person present, that she remained unnoticed, until all the tickets had been drawn, and the greater number of the women had left the spot. I then looked round, and beheld her supported by her husband, who was kneeling upon the ground, gazing upon her face, and drying her fast falling tears with his coarse handkerchief, and now and then pressing it to his own manly cheek.

Captain Loden advanced towards them. "I am sorry, Henry Jenkins," said he, "that fate has been against you; but bear up, and be stout-hearted."

"I am so, captain," said the soldier, as he looked up and passed his rough hand across his face, "but 'tis a hard thing to part from a wife, and she so soon to be a mother."

"O captain!" sobbed the young woman, "as you are both a husband and a father, do not take him from me! I have no friend in the wide world but one, and you will let him bide with me! Oh, take me with him!—take me with him—for the love of God take me with him, captain!" She fell on her knees, laid hold of the officer's sash, clasped it firmly between her hands, and looked up in his face, exclaiming, "Oh, leave me my only hope, at least till God has given me another," and repeated, in heart-rending accents, "Oh, take me with him! take me with him!"

The gallant officer was himself in tears—he knew

that it was impossible to grant the poor wife's petition without creating much discontent in his company, and he gazed upon them with that feeling with which a good man always regards the sufferings he cannot alleviate. At this moment a smart young soldier stepped forward, and stood before the captain with his hand to his cap.

"And what do *you* want, my good fellow?" said the officer.

"My name's John Carty, plase yer honour, and I belong to the second battalion."

"And what do you want here?"

"Only, yer honour," said Carty, scratching his head, "that poor man and his wife there are sorrow-hearted at parting, I'm thinking."

"Well, and what then?"

"Why, yer honour, they say I'm a likely lad, and I know I'm fit for sarvice,—and if yer honour would only let that poor fellow take my place in Captain Bond's company, and let me take his place in yours,—why, yer honour would make two poor things happy, and save the life of one of 'em, I'm thinking."

Captain Loden considered for a few minutes, and directing the young Irishman to remain where he was, proceeded to his brother officers' quarters. He soon made arrangements for the exchange of the soldiers, and returned to the place where he had left them.

"Well, John Carty," said he, "you go to Bengal with me ; and you, Henry Jenkins, remain at home with your wife."

"Thank yer honour," said John Carty, again touching his cap as he walked off.

Henry Jenkins and his wife both rose from the ground and rushed into each other's arms.

"God bless you, captain !" said the soldier, as he pressed his wife closer to his bosom.

"Oh, bless him for ever !" said the wife, "bless him with prosperity and a happy heart !—bless his wife, and bless his children," and she again fainted.

The officer, wiping a tear from his eye, and exclaiming, "May you never want a friend when I am far from you,—you, my good lad, and your amiable and loving wife !" and passed on to his company, while the happy couple went in search of John Carty.

* * * * *

About twelve months since, as two boys were watching the sheep confided to their charge, upon a wide heath in the county of Somerset, their attention was attracted by a soldier, who walked along apparently with much fatigue, and at length stopped to rest his weary limbs beside the old finger-post, which, at one time pointed out the way to the neighbouring villages ; but which now afforded no information to the traveller ; for age had rendered it useless.

The boys were gazing upon him with much curiosity

when he beckoned them towards him, and inquired the way to the village of Eldenby.

The eldest, a fine intelligent lad of about twelve years of age, pointed to the path, and asked if he were going to any particular house in the village.

"No, my little lad," said the soldier, "but it is on the high-road to Frome, and I have friends there; but, in truth, I am very wearied, and perhaps may find in yon village some person who will befriend a poor fellow, and look to God for a reward."

"Sir," said the boy, "my father was a soldier many years ago, and he dearly loves to look upon a red coat—if you come with me, you may be sure of a welcome."

"And you can tell us stories about foreign parts," said the younger lad, a fine chubby-cheeked fellow, who, with his watch-coat thrown carelessly over his shoulder, and his crook in his right hand, had been minutely examining every portion of the soldier's dress.

The boys gave instructions to their intelligent dog, who, they said, would take good care of the sheep during their absence; and in a few minutes the soldier and his young companions reached the gate of a flourishing farm-house, which had all the external tokens of prosperity and happiness. The younger boy trotted on a few paces before, to give his parents notice that they had invited a stranger to rest beneath their hospitable roof; and the soldier had just crossed the threshold of the door, when he was received by a joyful

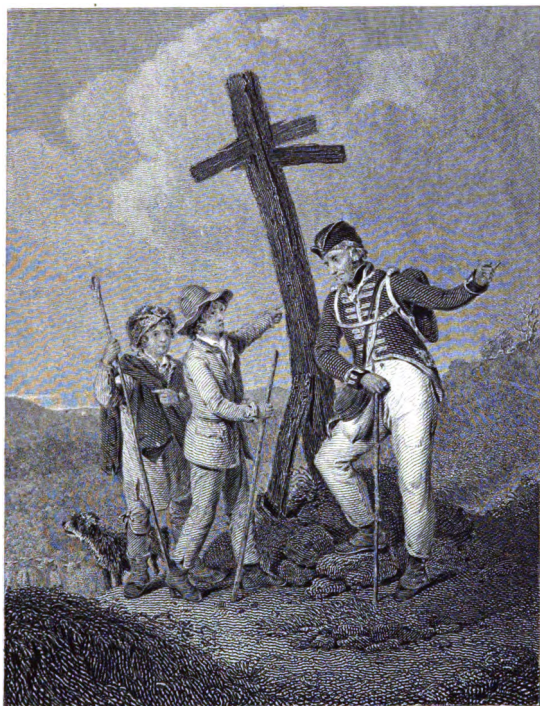


THE CITY OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE

JANUARY 18, 1894

REPORT OF THE
COMMISSIONER OF THE
LAND OFFICE
IN RESPONSE TO A
RESOLUTION PASSED
BY THE SENATE
MAY 1, 1893
RELATIVE TO THE
LANDS BELONGING TO
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
AND TO THE
STATE OF NEW YORK



The Soldier's Return

cry of recognition from his old friends, Henry Jenkins and his wife ; and he was welcomed as a brother to the dwelling of those, who, in all human probability, were indebted to him for their present enviable station.

It is unnecessary to pursue this story further than to add, that John Carty spent his furlough at Eldenby Farm ; and that at the expiration of it, his discharge was purchased by his grateful friends. He is now living in their happy dwelling ; and his care and exertions have contributed greatly to increase their prosperity. Nothing has been wrong with them since John Carty was their steward.

“Cast thy bread upon the waters,” said the wise man, “and it shall be returned to thee after many days.”





IV.

Seven and Seventeen.

“**A**ND am I indeed—indeed seven years old to-day? And in seven years more, nurse, shall I be a young woman, and have my own way, and do always as I please?”

“Yes, my beauty.”

“And dirty as many frocks as I like?”

“My darling, you do so now.”

“Well, I know that,” replied the pretty little lady, pertly; but no one will then dare to say, Miss Ida, don’t, or Miss Ida, do; because then I shall be—I know what—”

“An angel, my dear?”

“No—something better.”

“And what can be better than an angel, my precious?”

“Why, a beauty and an heiress, to be sure. Oh, nurse, how stupid you are, not to know that!”

“Oh, you dear, sweet, clever little creature!—they may well say, in the housekeeper’s room, and the servants’ hall, that you are the most wonderful child that ever was born.”

“I don’t care what they say in the housekeeper’s

room, or the servants' hall," retorted Miss Ida with an aristocratic toss of her head: "let me hear what they say in the drawing-room. I wonder, will papa, when he returns to-night, admire the ease and grace my dancing-master talks of—lol tol, lol de rol de ree." And the embryo heiress pirouetted before the cheval-glass that graced her nursery, almost as well as a dancing-master could desire.

I am very certain no young friend of mine can have read thus far without feeling convinced that Ida Leverton belonged to the unhappy class of children called "*spoilt*," and that her silly and ignorant nurse was guiding her to destruction. Providence had given the little heiress of Leverton a great deal of beauty and a fair share of understanding. She had, moreover, a quick and ready wit—such as wise parents and sensible governesses may so bring under subjection—turning it to quicken *thoughts*, not *words*—that, though a dangerous thing to play with, it becomes a pleasant and a profitable thing to use. But, my dear reader, the mother of poor Ida died a few hours after she was born: and, as her father had much to think of, she was left entirely to the care of a foolish, though an affectionate, servant. She had aunts; but I regret to say they very erroneously considered the little girl too young to be injured by the society of Nurse Scroop. We shall see.

It was Ida's birth-day; and her papa, before he left home, had invited a number of nice ladies and gentlemen and a great many little folk to his house, to spend the evening—and there was to be a dance,—and the carpet in the great drawing-room was removed,—and the beautiful curtains and couches, that had been covered with ever so much striped cotton, were disrobed, and looked as beautiful as—oh, dear! my young friends must find the simile. Well, Ida's head, I am sorry to say, ran upon nothing but finery for ten days, at least, before this grand gala; and she had neglected everything in the shape of work or lessons, and talked of blond and bouquets as if she were a milliner's maid. I beg it to be understood, that I would not make the acquaintance of any young lady who disregarded her apparel, whose frock was not always neatly closed, whose hair did not shine and throw off the sunbeams as unsullied as they came; because I know that a well-ordered mind will invariably be shown by well-ordered and well-fitted garments. But the dress I admire is of habit, not of preparation; and next to a "sloven," all rational people dislike "a dresser"—one who thinks time is like gossamer, only useful in frittering and flouncing;—but to my story.

Ida was ushered into the drawing-room by Nurse Scroop, who whispered, "Hold up your head, my darling, and speak out, and show off your dancing: you'll beat them all out, though there are a great many

strange ladies—my beauty—that's a love!" And old nurse parted with her nursling, after administering this precious sugar-and-poison advice.

How the lamps burned—how the music played—how the ladies praised—how the children waltzed—I leave to my young friends' imagination. Ida would have been perfectly happy, had she not overheard Lady Sarcasm say to Lady Deafness, that little Cecilia Howard carried herself much better than Miss Leverton. Now, she had so often been told to hold her head up, that she imagined it must be holding it well; and she positively strained her neck in the effort to make it as long as Cecilia's! Presently Mr. Leverton, who had not entered until the company were assembled, came to her, and, taking her hand, led her across the room, and introduced her to a mild, pale lady, who took her on her knee, and kissed her so very kindly, that, for a little while, she ceased to think about her own Honiton lace frock and her silver band; and thought she liked the strange visitor better than any one she had ever seen.

"She is very like you, Leverton," said the lady; "and I am sure, at least I hope, that she is a good girl."

"She has been sadly neglected, I fear," replied Mr. Leverton, "and knows very little of anything worth knowing."

Ida was astonished; she thought she knew a great deal of *everything* worth knowing.

The lady smiled and kissed her again.

"This is her seventh birth-day," said Ida's papa ; adding, "what will she be in ten years' time ?"

"Everything you could wish her, I am sure, if she is properly managed," replied the mild lady.

"If she has learned nothing good, I am sure she has learnt nothing bad," observed Mr. Leverton ; "and that, at least, is something."

"I cannot agree with you. I am convinced that the mind never remains inactive : if she has learnt nothing good, she *must* have learnt something bad. However, we will try to root out the evil as soon as possible, and sow good seed in such fertile ground."

"Are you to be my governess, then ?" inquired Ida, who drew such conclusion from the tenor of the lady's words—"Are you to be my governess ?" she repeated, looking into the mild lady's face, which, she perceived, grew very red.

"Little girls must not ask questions," said Mr. Leverton, patting her cheek, and smiling at the same time.

"May I again say I do not exactly agree with you ?" observed the lady. "Little girls may surely ask questions, provided they do it in a modest, quiet manner, and without interrupting the conversation of others. Curiosity is a virtue, when it seeks to discover what is necessary and useful to be known ;—it only becomes dangerous when, like the lady in 'Blue Beard,' it peeps into forbidden things."

"I have read 'Blue Beard,'" said Ida, anxious to display her information, "and a great many other books;" adding, with a dangerous longing for admiration, "Did you see me dance?"

"Yes, my dear."

Ida looked as if she expected some commendation; but neither the lady (whose cheek was again pale) nor her papa added one word of praise. This mortified the little maid sadly, and she felt ready to burst into tears. She, however, restrained herself, and was soon again called upon to dance with Sybella Leslie.

"She certainly dances very gracefully," said the pale lady to Mr. Leverton; "but I did not like to tell her so, because she appeared to solicit applause. A female cannot be too early taught the danger of vanity, and the true incitement to accomplishments."

"And what is the true incitement?"

"Usefulness."

"But you would not make a woman *merely* useful?" persisted Mr. Leverton.

"No; I would make her *greatly* useful. I consider accomplishments to be so as well as knowledge. Even in the formation of a flower, the Almighty has made the more beautiful parts essential to its value. The gaudy leaves of a tulip protect the germ from injury. On the same principle I would have every woman educated rather to form a valuable whole, than a brilliant part."

"I have heard some very clever persons say, that education was always the effect of circumstances."

"More shame for the parents who permit it to be so!" replied the lady. "I, too, have often heard the observation; but *never* from those who had been cared for in their youth. I am willing to admit that strong minds are capable of great exertions, and frequently educate themselves; yet they always remind me of a garden, where some glorious flowers are cherished with peculiar care, but where you are perpetually annoyed by disagreeable weeds, that increase, multiply, and mar the beauty of the parterre. Nevertheless, granting that strong minds perform great things, what is to become of the weak ones?—they are not less valuable in the sight of their Creator because of their weakness; though, if neglected in their youth, they too often become wicked. But I am betrayed into the error of speaking a homily, where I only intended to make a reply. The young ladies will expect us to lead the way to their early supper; and—"

"We shall have plenty of time to talk over dear Ida's education," interrupted her father, as he conducted the lady to the supper-room.

Ida was very tired and very sleepy, yet she was startled and surprised at the agitation of her nurse, who, when she conducted her from the drawing-room, almost suffocated her with tears and kisses.

"What's the matter, nurse?" she inquired. "Do

take off my shoes and my frock. I wish nobody would ever give any balls; though everybody did admire my dancing, except papa and that pale mild lady."

"Ah, miss, miss—that pale lady! you may well call her pale—so unlike your own dear mamma, who had cheeks like roses. Mild—*mild* indeed! My poor darling, that I have petted so much, and humoured in everything, that I never in all my life contradicted, and who never knew what it was not to have her own way! Ah! you, my sweet young lady, will soon find the difference between your poor Nurse Scroop and a step-mother!"

"A what!" screamed Ida, stamping at the same moment on the floor.

"A step-mother!—a horrid step-mother; and most likely a step-brother into the bargain. They will beat you black and blue, feed you on mouldy bread, and dress you in coarse cloth."

Ida wept outright at such a picture.

"There, don't cry, darling," continued the kind-minded but most injudicious nurse; "don't cry, but go to bed. I should not be at all surprised if you were put to sleep in the garret by-and-by:—and to think that his own servants knew nothing about the wedding till to-night! Oh, I wish you were old enough to pluck up a spirit!"

"But I *am* old enough!" shouted the lady vixen; "and I know what a step-mamma is—it's worse ten times,

and wickeder, than a governess—and I won't have a step-mamma, that I won't; and I'll go to the drawing-room and say so."

"Oh, no! my lamb, you must not do that," exclaimed Mrs. Scroop; but, before the words were out of her mouth, the lady (who at that moment was as little like "*a lamb*" as can well be imagined) was out of the nursery, down the stairs like a lap-wing, and positively into the apartment where Mr. and Mrs. Leverton, and one or two intimate friends, were conversing in a group, near the fire-place.

Ida flung herself into her father's arms, and sobbed on his bosom. Her long, half-curved, silken hair fell over her neck and shoulders, and her disarranged dress gave her altogether a wild and unrestrained appearance. The pale lady, whom we shall hereafter designate as Mrs. Leverton, kindly advanced to inquire the cause of her agitation; but the child, in her violence, threw off the hand that would have caressed her, and sobbed out,—

"I won't have a step-mamma!—I won't have a step-mamma!"

"And who told you you *had* a step-mamma?" said her father.

"Oh, I know that lady is my step-mamma, and I won't have a step-mamma—indeed, indeed I won't!" persisted Ida, crying as if her heart would break.

Nurse Scroop followed her down stairs, but dreaded

to enter the room, lest her master and new mistress should be displeased at her mischievous interference.

Mr. Leverton disengaged the child from his arms ; and, walking to the door, observed the nurse on the landing-place.

"This is some of your doings," he said to her in an angry tone ; "but, since you are pleased thus to pervert my daughter's mind, the sooner you provide for yourself elsewhere, the better."

"You shan't send away my nurse!—you shan't send away my nurse!" vociferated the angry Ida, losing all respect for her father's presence and authority. Mr. Leverton, as I have said at the commencement of my story, did not understand how children ought to be managed ; and so he looked towards his wife, as if he wished her to determine what was to be done.

Mrs. Leverton advanced mildly from the other end of the room ; and addressing the nurse in a firm, and yet a very sweet-toned voice, observed,—

"Take Miss Leverton out of the room, put her to bed, and to-morrow your master and I will determine upon what course it is best to pursue as regards both the young lady and yourself. Thus much I would say now : I should be sincerely sorry that any old servant, after living long and (to the best of her abilities) serving faithfully in this house, should be dismissed, unless strong necessity demanded it. I am sure you are attached to your nursling ; and, next to my husband's

happiness, it is both my duty and my pleasure to minister to the happiness of his child."

Nurse Scroop had entered the drawing-room with a scowling brow and a trembling lip; but there was a dignity and a sweetness about "*the new lady*," that both awed and won her; and, without making any reply to her observations, she courtesied respectfully, and left the room.

"I opposed the mystery you wished preserved towards Ida, as to my new relationship to her, my dear Leverton," continued Mrs. Leverton, addressing her husband; "because mystery is little else than falsehood—it is incompatible with either truth or innocence, and, therefore, should never have been resorted to: it would have been much better for you to have told her that I was what the world calls a 'step-mother,' and then pointed out, kindly and judiciously, the advantages which, I hope, she will derive from my care and affection. I cannot love you, dearest, without loving your child."

Mr. Leverton looked affectionately on his wife; and well he might. With more beauty than usually falls to the lot of woman, she also possessed a store of rich and practical information, a calm judgment, a subdued and patient spirit, and a warm heart. She was fully alive to the advantages of education, because she had experienced their excellence in herself; and she resolved to devote herself steadily to the formation

of Ida's character, and the direction of her abilities. "I am not blessed," she would say, "with a strong, or even a healthy constitution; and I am sure that in a very few years dear Leverton will again weep over his widowhood: be it my task to prevent its being lonely, as before. I will train Ida to be his friend and companion; I will build my monument within their bosoms; and, when I am dead, they will bless me for the happiness I planted in their own home."

This excellent lady had undertaken a task of no little difficulty. It was very wicked, but it is no less true, that Ida at first positively *hated* her step-mother with a most decided hatred.

Poor Nurse Scroop had of necessity been discharged; and Mrs. Leverton devoted herself, as she intended, to eradicate evil and forward the growth of good in her step-child's mind. She never attempted to mislead her, in any way, or on any topic. She told her that God had made her beautiful; but she also convinced her how much more admiration was excited by plain girls who are good, than by pretty girls who are unamiable.

Mrs. Leverton loved to draw her comparisons from nature, because then she was convinced that her groundwork was just; and one day, when Ida appeared discontented at some remarks she had made on beauty, she sent her into the garden, with an injunction to gather a nosegay of the flower she herself liked best.

It was early in the month of May, and the little maid soon returned with a nosegay of wall-flowers.

"What, Ida!" exclaimed her wise and gentle teacher, "wall-flowers!—wild, simple wall-flowers! Did you not see tulips, blue-bells, anemones, and many other much handsomer blossoms?"

"Oh, yes! many *handsomer*, certainly."

"Then why did you not gather them?"

"Because they had no smell."

"True, Ida," replied Mrs. Leverton, kissing her forehead; "and this very bouquet proves what I have so often said. My dear girl, *goodness* is to the *person* what *fragrance* is to the *flower*—an essence that will endure when the beauty of *both* decays. Do you understand me?"

Ida did understand her; and a precept so illustrated must be long remembered by every child, because the sight of a flower cannot fail to recall it.

She also managed so to temper Ida's wit, that it retained its brightness though it lost its edge—enlivening, not cutting; yet, notwithstanding all her care and culture, she could not but regret that the young lady was a favourite with this dangerous yet fascinating tempter, who too often sits enthroned on the prettiest lips in the world, armed with glittering but poisoned arrows.

"Wit must make you foes," Mrs. Leverton would say; "but remember, love, it will never make you friends."

Ida, who began by hating, at last, and imperceptibly,

finished by loving her, whom she of herself now called "her darling *mamma*." And even Nurse Scroop, who, after a time, was permitted occasionally to visit Miss Ida, "allowed that the dear child was astonishingly improved."

It must be confessed, that had Ida been a child of weak understanding, she would not so soon have profited by her mother's instruction ; and, be it also remembered, that, though a girl of quick and violent temper, she was totally free from the mean and abominable vice of obstinacy—ready to acknowledge and atone for a fault almost as soon as it was committed. It is even more difficult to manage the obstinate than the foolish ; the one you can command, but the other you can rarely lead.

I will now pass over the lapse of years from seven to seventeen, convinced that my young friends anticipate a happy result from the care bestowed upon her whom we commenced by calling a "young heiress."

In a beautiful and well-ordered room at Leverton Castle, and on a couch covered with blue silk, lay a *very thin, very pale* lady ; her lips were quite white, and looked dry and parched—so parched, that ever and anon a tall and graceful girl, in the bloom of early womanhood, applied a cooling liquid to their surface ; and then the *very thin, very pale* lady looked up, and a smile passed over her still beautiful countenance and beamed in her soft eyes.

"Dearest Ida," she said, addressing the tall, graceful girl, "this is your seventeenth birthday, and yet you are chained, by your kind and affectionate feelings, to my couch of sickness and suffering. I know you ought to be elsewhere; yet the selfishness with which our nature is impregnated makes me love to retain you here."

"My own dear mamma," replied Ida Leverton, throwing her arms round her neck, and pressing her rich glowing cheek to the pale one of the excellent lady—"my own dearest mamma, can you think I could be happy out of your sight at any time during your illness, but particularly *this* day—this *dear* day, when I feel my obligations to you return tenfold? This day ten years what bitter promise I held out! Vain, ignorant, violent, and prejudiced against my best friend—who could have attributed the smallest portion of blame to you, if you had dismissed me to some school, where, amongst other foolish girls, my vices might have been confirmed, and my prejudices established? Remembering what I was, and feeling what education has done for me—how can I appreciate its advantages as they deserve?"

"I am amply rewarded," said Mrs. Leverton, "amply rewarded at all times; but more than ever rewarded when I see the affection you bestow upon your little brother. Ida, Ida, the time will soon come when you must be to that child in the place of a mother; and

such is my trust in you, that I can leave him with a mind fully and entirely resting on the excellence and judgment of seventeen. It is events, not time, that bring wisdom; and you, my own Ida, are older than many who have numbered twenty years."

Ida hid her face in her hands, and wept.

The day passed on; and, as the evening advanced, the invalid became so visibly worse, that Ida longed most impatiently for her father's return from town. Her step-brother (whose birth had destroyed all prospect of the heirship Nurse Scroop taught her to look forward to at such an early age), was leaning from the window, watching for "papa;" and Mrs. Leverton's dimming eyes were eagerly fixed upon the trees that overshadowed the avenue, as if, on their topmost boughs, she could discern indications of his approach.

"Read to me again, love," she said; "or sing to your harp one of David's penitential psalms." Ida obeyed, though her voice was tremulous and low.

She had hardly finished, when Mrs. Leverton raised her finger, and the word "*hush*" lingered on her lip; "I hear the tramping of your father's horses,—is it not so, Edward?"

"It is dear papa," replied the child: "may I run and meet him?"

"Gently, gently," repeated Ida, as the little fellow, who understood not he would soon have only *one* parent to meet, rushed from the room.

Mrs. Leverton raised herself a little from the couch, and, supported by Ida's arm, prepared to meet her husband—she felt, though she did not say so, for the last time.

“My dearest Leverton, I am so glad, so thankful, that God has spared me for this meeting—is the deed executed?”

Mr. Leverton, who was greatly shocked at the change that had taken place in his wife's appearance since the morning, silently placed a roll of parchment in her extended hands.

“For you, my child,” she said, laying the bond on Ida's lap; “your father has gifted you with half his property. I would not have you receive *only* a daughter's portion, through the instrumentality of me or mine.”

Ida would have interrupted her, but she raised her hand in token of silence, and looked on the clouds, tinged with the last rays of the setting sun.—“About this hour, this day ten years, dearest Leverton, we both looked upon your child; and in answer to the question you put, ‘What will *she* be in ten years' time?’—I replied, ‘Everything you can wish her, *if she is properly managed.*’ Is she everything you can wish? and are you satisfied with your poor wife's stewardship?”

“Satisfied, Mary,” he replied, “is a poor word to express the thankfulness, the gratitude I feel for what you have done—” He was too agitated to proceed, but pressed her hand earnestly to his heart.

"It is enough," she murmured ; and requested that her little son might be brought into the room. She motioned that he should stand between his father and sister, and then she placed a hand of his in theirs :—" You will be as a mother to him, Ida ?" Ida's tears replied. "How wise it is," she continued, in a low, wavering tone—"how very wise it is to do our duty ! Had I neglected Ida, she would have been unfitted for the charge she has so willingly promised to undertake. May the Almighty bless you all ; and may the renewal of each day be the renewal of happiness !"

She laid down her head, and her existence and her blessing passed from her lips at the same moment.

I need only add to this true tale, that Ida, after SEVENTEEN, realized the prophecy made when she was SEVEN.





V.

The Rose of Fennock Dale.

“**D**O not grieve so, my sister,” said Frances Dillon, “do not sorrow as those without hope ; do not mourn as those who have no comforter. See, even the bonny roses, that not an hour ago I placed in your bosom, are covered with your tears,” she continued, while a bright smile played for a moment over her anxious face. Rose looked on the flowers ; and, while her blooming sister shook their drooping leaves, she extended her arm, and pushed from her forehead the clustering curls that shadowed her sweet face.

“ Yes, Frances, yes ; my tears blight your roses, just as my sorrows blight your happiness. Alas ! alas ! that I cannot alone suffer, who am alone guilty.”

She raised her dark and expressive, but almost rayless eyes to the unclouded sky, and still more rapidly the tears passed along her pallid cheek.

It was a fine clear evening in September ; and perhaps nature had never blessed such a solitary spot with so much beauty. A narrow trout-stream gurgled





The Faded Rose

through the dell, that was adorned by groups of pine, ash, and platanus; the bright purple and yellow of autumn slightly tinged their foliage; the surrounding heights were speckled with sheep; and on the slope of one of the most distant hills, the white spire of the village church of D—— peered over the lofty trees that seemed anxious to conceal it from the profane and vulgar gaze. The bank of the streamlet on which stood the cottage of Frances Dillon, embowered in fragrance, like the nest of the cushat dove, was carpeted with purple thyme; while the hair-bell, the fragile poppy, and the sky-tinted cyanus, bordered the pathway that led to her sweet but humble abode. Myriads of singing birds nurtured their young, and poured forth their melody in this fairy scene; the timid partridge, in spring, hardly evaded the foot of the village girls; the robin, everywhere familiar, was *there* an inmate; and the green woodpecker remained undisturbed in its beech-tree haunt, even by the barking of old Ranger, who, participating in the feelings of his young mistress, suffered bird, rabbit, and squirrel, to pass and repass his path unmolested.

Frances was the youngest, and Rose—the withering Rose—the once “Bonny Rose of Fennock Dale,” the eldest child of respectable and industrious parents. Rose was ten years older than Frances; and the younger had at *one* time been so accustomed to look up to the elder sister as an example of female excellence,

as well as of female loveliness, that even at the period to which I have just alluded, Frances often fancied the tale of Rose's wretchedness a dream.

Time was, when every feeling of that poor girl's ingenuous heart sent the crimson blush to that pale, pale cheek ; time *was*, when the brilliancy of those fine dark eyes dazzled all who looked on them ;—*now* that cheek is indeed faded ; those eyes have become rayless ; the bounding step is changed to a feeble totter ; the joyous voice is now hardly articulate. Her form and features are indeed still beautiful ; but the character of their beauty is sadly, is fearfully altered. Once she was—but what avails it now ? What is the violet, robbed of its perfume ?—what is the lily when its purity is stained ?—what is the casket, when the jewel is stolen ? Alas ! that such similes should apply to Rose Dillon.

Her mother died when Frances was only two years old ; and to this infant, Rose was all that even an affectionate parent could have been. Her beauty, her wit, but above all her tenderness to her sister, were the constant subjects of village panegyric ; and many ardent admirers watched the steps of the rustic beauty, as she ascended to the church of D——, leaning on her father's arm, and supporting the still tottering steps of the little Fanny.

With many virtues, Rose was too great a favourite not to possess many faults. Her taste was so often

consulted by the village girls—her affectionate attention to her father and sister so praised by the village pastor—and her beauty and superior acquirements so admired by the young, and even by the aged inhabitants of D——, that weeds soon sprung up, and mingled with the flowers. They were, indeed, weeds that might have been easily rooted out; but unhappily her indulgent father saw them not, and they grew on unchecked. She was impatient of restraint, fond of display, too often angry, and sometimes, though not frequently, naughty to her equals. 'Tis true, that tears of sorrow usually followed, when she had been angry without a cause, or had wounded the feelings of her village friends; but such bursts of tenderness did not teach her the luxury of self-control; and the noble generosity of her disposition made those, who ought to have corrected this growing evil, forget the past in the present. She was idolized by the poor, for she was truly kind to them; and when she sighed for wealth and power, she *fancied* it was only that she might become the Lady Bountiful of Fennock Dale.

Sometimes the pastor would seriously lecture her on her love of dress.

“The flowers,” she would answer, “grew in my father’s garden; and it was only to please *him* that I twined this jessamine in my hair; surely, dear sir, there can be no *harm* in gratifying my beloved parent.”

Alas! how truly did he tell her, that the love of

ornament creeps slowly, but surely, into the female heart ;—that the girl who twines the lily in her tresses, and looks at herself in the clear spring, will soon wish that the lily was fadeless, and the stream a mirror.

A circumstance occurred, when Rose was about eighteen, which caused her father bitter sorrow ; and he feared that his child had imbibed “high flighted” notions, for which, poor man, he could not account.

George Douglas was the son of an opulent gardener in the village of D——, and he had been long and sincerely attached to Rose Dillon. Her father urged, in strong and affectionate language, the suit of this upright and generous youth ; but a scornful smile curled her lip, as she told her parent “it was quite impossible that she could marry any man in Mr. Douglas’s situation.”

“*Situation*, Rose,” repeated the astonished Dillon ; “what do you mean by *situation* ? George Douglas is a pattern for village youths. He has loved you long—since childhood you have known each other. Who can say they saw George idle ?—who ever saw him intoxicated ? His word is his bond ; and, ah, Rose, in the house of God, have ye not marked his godly and pious conduct ?”

“I cannot find fault in any way with George. I love him as a brother ; but, indeed, father, I could not marry the son of a——” she paused, ashamed of her own feelings.

“The son of whom, Rose ?” said her father, really

angry. "I hoped, child, that I did not at first understand you. What means this pride? The son of an English yeoman, whose station in life is equal, whose wealth is superior to mine—I ask what you mean by this?"

Rose wept; and Heterick Dillon, the tender, *too* tender parent, was softened.

"Well, do not cry, Rose; I would not make thee unhappy, child, for the wealth of worlds, but God—" (the old man clasped his hands), "God of his infinite mercy grant that you may be as happy with the man of your own choice, as you would have been with poor George."

Rose kissed her father, and assured him that she never would marry but for his or her sister's advantage.

The old man drew himself up to his full and majestic height.

"Daughter, all I desire is, that you may ever support the honest character bequeathed you by your forefathers. The Dillons have lived in Fennock Dale nearly two hundred years—their daughters without spot—their sons without blemish. I want nothing from my children but their affection,—and that," he added, "they will not refuse their grey-headed father."

Long and fervent were the prayers of the old man that night for this wayward child. Two or three years passed away—Rose increased in beauty—but her faults had not departed with time.

D—— Park, the residence of the Earl of D——, had been long neglected by its possessors ; but an uninterrupted course of dissipation at length obliged the earl and his worn-out countess to rusticate for some months at their beautiful seat. What village, ever so remote, has not, at one time or other, experienced the contagion of vice—the origin of which can be too often traced to some of the *beau monde*, making it their place of refuge from debts and duns ; and, in exchange for the shelter they receive, imparting their follies to its unsuspecting, admiring, and wondering inhabitants ! Half-pay officers, briefless barristers, and the junior branches of the nobility, are always anxious for a few weeks' fishing or shooting ; and many of this description wished (most disinterestedly, no doubt), to prevent their *dear* and *noble* friends from feeling the sudden change from St. James's Square to D—— too melancholy, and volunteered their services to spend a short time with them, much to the discomfiture of the lord, who wished to retrench, and to the joy of the pleasure-loving lady. Perhaps there are few things more distressing than to witness the profanation of a sweet and retired village, by the thoughtless and the vicious crowding the train of some mighty noble, who visits his paternal estates, not, certainly, as the dispenser of blessings. To hear the murderous gun, where the loudest sound had been the cooing of the wood-pigeon, or the cawing of the venerable rook—to see the scarlet jacket of the brutal

huntsman glaring through the green-wood, and then a train of *lordly* men pursue to death the timid hare—sweet commoner of nature's wildest paths ! The village youth, instead of inhaling the perfumed air, or joining in manly sport on the open green—now within the walls of the loathsome “public,” betting, drinking, and swearing, with my lord's lackey, or the colonel's body-guard. And the sweet village maids—creatures so pure—so devoid of art and guile, with the bright tint of innocence on their cheeks, and the words of truth on their lips—changed by the flattery of the men, and the example of the city misses, into—what it makes one's blood curdle to think upon.

The beauty of Rose Dillon was of so commanding and striking a nature, that she was soon designated, at the Park, as the “haughty maid of Fennock Dale.” She smiled contemptuously at the politeness of the Earl's own gentleman ; and even the French valet—the man of essence and elegance—a *connoisseur*, and a decider on matters of *virtu*, met with nothing but her ridicule ; the village girls wondered—and the pastor and her father extolled her strength of mind.

One fine spring morning, little Frances wandered further than usual from her father's cottage, and stooping to gather a bunch of primroses, which peered through the green sedges that skirted the trout-stream, her foot slipped, and she fell in. A gentleman who was fishing near the spot heard the splash, and with much

promptitude and decision, rescued the child from a watery grave. As one of the visitors at D—— Park, he had heard of the beauty of Rose, and was pleased to have an opportunity of seeing the “Rose of Fennock Dale,” who, bending over the body of her half-lifeless sister, far surpassed what this man of fashion had expected to behold.

The first feeling of Rose’s heart towards the preserver of her sister was gratitude—her next, admiration; his noble and insinuating manners, his fine form, and his expressive face, were *all* objects of admiration to the unsuspicious girl. She thought the world unblemished as the book of nature—she had never found the poison of the aconite in the perfume of the rose, or the deadly hue of the nightshade on the white bosom of the lily.

Greville thought Rose the most beautiful girl he had ever met. In the brilliant circles in which he moved, both in London and Paris, he had seen nothing like her; he was wearied of the match-making mothers, and husband-hunting daughters, who crowd our assemblies; he was wearied of *conversazioni*, where stars and blues and *litterati* sip weak tea, and—“blackier—bitterer stuff”—*ennui* devoured him, and he sought refuge at D—— Park, where, until he beheld Rose Dillon, he saw nothing to amuse his restless mind. He had served his country, and the laurel was yet fresh on his brow; foremost in the battle-field, and gayest in the hall, Greville was still the slave of his passions—the

victim of his vices ; he called the mild doctrines of Christianity, priestcraft, forgiveness of injuries, cowardice ; Voltaire was his oracle ; Rousseau, the fatally insinuating Rousseau, his high priest. Saved 'midst the slaughter of thousands—" 'twas chance," he said, " that turned the thunderbolt of war."

To his surprise he found Rose's mental powers much superior to her birth and station, and he soon discovered in her the pride that "leadeth to destruction." To marry her was contrary to his feelings and interests ; and basely and wickedly did he labour to undermine her principles, that she might become his prey ; but so he called it not. He called it "emancipating her free-born mind"—"teaching her to read the book of nature"—"casting off the trammels of a foolish world"—"making use of the noble gift of reason." He was too skilful a courtier—too wise in wickedness, to frighten her at once by the doctrines of deism ; but gradually and cautiously did he labour to sap the foundation on which her honest and virtuous parent had built.

Then how dull and cold to her once attentive ear became the precepts of the village pastor—how wearisome the ascent to the village church—the endearments of Frances became troublesome ; but when at night her venerable father opened the book of life, and read the Holy Scriptures in his usual firm, unbroken tone, Rose's spirit sunk, and felt sick and troubled ; her voice sounded faintly in the evening hymn, and the un-

bidden truth flashed not unfrequently across her mind, that her heart's home was not in Fennock Dale.

It is painful to trace the events that followed, suffice it, that in six months from the time that Greville saved the life of the little Frances, Fennock Dale Cottage had no mistress—Heterick Dillon but *one* child that he called his own.

But weak as was the fabric, and powerful as had been the attack, the only way that Greville could accomplish his object was by a feigned marriage ; this, with so accomplished a villain, was a matter of little consequence. And when the truth was afterwards revealed to his wretched victim, there was not sufficient virtue left to induce her to pursue the only course by which repentance could have been availing.

Alas ! what bitterness, what heart-grief was in the once happy dwelling of her father ! but there is a voice which speaks peace to every wounded heart. And, as years passed on, old Heterick prayed that *she*—that lost one, might yet find refuge in a Saviour's dying love.

The flowers of Fennock Dale still bloomed sweetly ; the trout-stream still reflected the clear blue heavens and the clustering trees ; and the bustle and misery, occasioned by the Earl of D——'s sojournment at D—— Park had passed ; but the bitterness of death was in Dillon's cottage.

“ Raise me up, Frances,” said the old man, “ and let me once more see the sun sink behind the hill.”

The beauty of age equals that of youth, though its *character* is so very different. He was noble even in his dying hour. His white hair, thinly scattered over his wrinkled forehead; and then his lovely child, kneeling at his bed-side; her fair white arms resting on the large old Bible, which lay widely open on the snowy coverlid—her almost breathless gaze turned to her revered parent;—it was a beautiful picture, and language cannot do it justice.

Heterick Dillon rested his elbow on the pillow, and, with a trembling hand, turned over the leaves of his forefather's Bible, until he arrived at the last page, where his birth, and the birth of his children, *had been* recorded. A huge blot was the only token of where Rose's unhappy name *once* had been.

"Frances, give me a pen; I want to replace—her's—your sister's—" *my child's* name, he would have added; but the words died on his quivering lip.

With a bursting heart, the youthful girl presented the pen. Dillon made a strong effort—replaced her name in the holy book.

"Show her this."

After a pause, he whispered, "Tell her *I* forgave—God will forgive her. She was a mother to thy infancy, child; forget her not—now pray."

He was closing the still open volume, when a shadow flitted past the lattice. In a instant, a ghastly figure,

half fell, half rushed, into the little chamber, and a fearful shriek, "Father, forgive!"

The old man, with a last effort, sprang from his bed, staggered a few spaces, and fell a lifeless corpse, on the body of his wretched daughter. The ink upon the Bible page was not yet dry.

Weeks—months rolled on; Rose neither spoke nor wept. Her brain was seared; her heart was breaking. Frances amply returned the care her sister once bestowed on her. Night and day the tender girl watched the flickering reason of the wretched sister; and when she did, at length, speak and weep, extracted from her, at intervals, the tale of her miseries. Greville's love was like the desert whirlwind—fierce and destructive; it soon passed away. But he was proud of Rose; and her devoted attachment gratified his vanity, while her mental energies commanded his respect. She followed him to the sultry eastern climes, and preserved his life more than once by her judgment and care. Two of her children fell victims to the climate; a third just reached the English shore, and expired. Yet Rose lived true to her first—her only love, and almost smiled, in bitter scorn, at the wreck of a mother's hopes. Greville was still with her.

The thunderbolt was about to rend her last earthly happiness; if, indeed, *guilt* and happiness can ever be, even for a moment, united. Greville married! and to another; *him*, the idol of her adoration! Impossible!

but so it was ; and, with mixed emotions of grief and despair, she fled the abode of infamy. The wounded dove, even from foreign climes, will try to regain the home from which the plunderer's hand has snatched it.

Rose Dillon turned her steps towards the cot of her forefathers. She paused, and seated herself on the stile that led to the village church-yard. Two peasants passed.

"I know he cannot last till morning," said one.

"He would have been a hale old man even now, had it not been for that jade who brought his grey hairs with sorrow to his grave. But never mind ; she'll never know rest or peace. The curse will follow her to her dying day. You had a lucky escape, Douglas, when she refused you ; an ungrateful daughter could never have been a good wife."

She heard no more, but rushed madly down the vale, once the abode of her innocent and happy days.

"There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked ;" but there is pardon to those who repent, and peace to those who trust in a Saviour's mercy. She did repent. In that mercy she trusted ; and, doubtless, that pardon she obtained.

Rose would sit for hours in the shadow and the silence, a withered flower in her hands, and her thoughts fixed on the mournful past. And when, in a few short months, the gentle Frances followed to the grave her sister's remains, the aged pastor, who remem-

bered the early beauty of her who had drained the cup of sorrow and of death, in a few emphatic words told of her penitence and of her faith in Christ.

"Conscious," said he, "of her faults—humbled to a sense of her own unworthiness—shorn of that pride which was her bane, Rose Dillon breathed out her spirit in prayers and thanksgivings to that Being, who, at the last, received her into his fold.

"You, my young friends, whom she knew in infancy, and who saw her spirit quiver on her lips, when, in her dying moments, she summoned you to her bed-side, that you might hear the last wishes of a dying penitent, will not easily forget the scene."

The foot-stone of Heterick Dillon's grave is at the head of Rose's. Sweet in the early spring are the violets and primroses that blossom round it. No gaudy flowers mark it, even during the smiling, happy days of summer ; but the pale starry eyed jessamine, the wild rose, and the creeping honeysuckle, guard the green sward from the noon-tide sun. And though the village girls do not garland it with flowers, you may often see them, standing and gazing, silently, and with tearful eyes, over the humble grave of ROSE DILLON.





VI.

The Mountain Daisy.

THERE was no use in arguing the matter ; it would have been ridiculous to attempt to persuade a single inhabitant of the village, high or low, that our Mountain Daisy was anything short of absolute perfection ;—a little terrestrial angel—a—how we rummaged our perplexed brains to procure an appropriate name for that dear child, when first she came to Devon Glade. Her own, to be sure, was a very pretty one, Isabel de Mondalberto, but it would not do for us. First, we called her the Lily of the Vale ; but Mr. Crabthorne (who is a great botanist) sensibly remarked that it was a very improper title, because a lily was white, and Isabel was very brown ; the lily of the vale moreover delights in valleys, but our little favourite's cottage hung like a bird-cage over one of the Devon Crags ; and she was continually forming acquaintance with all the wild goats in the neighbourhood. Then my cousin designated her The Forget-me-not. We asked him why ? and he very foolishly said, because Isabel's eyes were like that lovely flower.

The great goose!—her eyes were black! And such eyes! no artist upon earth, except Sir Thomas Lawrence, could paint such eyes:—not the firm set English greys, so properly governed that they open and shut like those of the great doll in Oxford Street, but living, speaking eyes—so rich, so lustrous, that when they were suffused with tears (and they sometimes were) they sparkled like diamonds under rain-drops. We were indeed sadly puzzled, but at last the matter was settled—she was meek as she was beautiful—she dwelt among rocks and mountains; and she was everlastingly decking her pet kid's neck with daisy garlands—so we called her—I do not think we could have done better—"The Mountain Daisy."

"The Goat Nest," (as the cottage where our Daisy dwelt had long been designated,) after the death of old Simon Mattocks, was for a considerable period without a tenant; it was so wildly situated, and so difficult of access, that the landlord would have pulled it down, were it not that, viewed from the glade, it formed a wild and beautiful object. The larch, the fir, the oak, and here and there the spreading beech, afforded it shelter from sun and storm; and the ledge of mixed shingle and sward on which it rested was so carefully cultivated by our little mountaineer, that even in the valley's inmost bosom, the rose and honeysuckle did not blossom or twine more luxuriantly than over the Goat Nest. The garden was speckled with geraniums and myrtles, and

such delicious thyme ! that her bees—nature's wild and useful commoners—seldom winged over the low rustic wall that was more than half covered by virgins-bower and gigantic wall-flowers, but hummed and worked in their own realm, setting a sweet example of industry, cheerfulness, and contentment. A very high rock towered behind the cottage, and from it poured a stream of the coldest, purest water, which sometimes gurgled and made its way through the tangled brush-wood, wrangling with every bush and bramble that intercepted its course, then dashing over the fallen trees and sharp stones, with the impetuosity of a young lordling at his first fox hunt, and finally continuing its course in the valley, over a bed of sparkling sand, with as much sweetness and placidity as if nothing had happened to disturb it in its path. The Daisy's greatest enjoyment was to take off her shoes and stockings, and with no other living companions than her goats, accompany this mountain stream on its way ; now in, now out of the water ; now gathering the tasselled hazel, the broad fern, or the clustering wild grape : or in spring, peeping into the nest of the soaring lark, or scattering crumbs for the familiar robin, which soon learned to follow her steps, and pour forth its thanks along every path she trod.

Mid-way down the hill, there was a somewhat level piece of ground, called "The Rest," where the village girls washed their clothes ; and there, one morning, I

surprised my little heroine, leaning against a tub that some one had left on the edge of the bank, her dress more off than on, and her eyes upturned, with a sweet, yet melancholy expression, which I shall never forget ; her kid was drinking at her feet, but there was no garland round its neck.

"What a charming morning, Isabel," said I, "but, love, you will catch cold ; where are your shoes ?"

"I left them at the cottage, madam ; and I do not fear cold," was her reply.

"There is something the matter, my dear," I continued, for she turned from me to hide the tears that were gathering in her eyes.

"Oh, no, only I am so glad to meet you ; my dear grandmamma is not well, and I wanted to send to you, and she would not let me ; but I strolled down, and was waiting for some one who would take a message into the village to you ; for I fear she is very ill, worse than she seems."

There was a mystery about the inhabitants of the Goat Nest which completely teased the gossips of Devon Glade. Madame de Mondalberto, our Daisy's grandmamma, was hardly ever seen in the village ; and her only attendant, a stiff elderly Italian woman, either did not, or pretended not to, understand English. I had several times clambered up to her dwelling and visited the old lady, and was always received by her with that dignified politeness, which showed more acquaintance

with courts than cottages. When, indeed, she thanked me for the kindness shown to our beloved Daisy, the tears used to rush to her eyes, and a warm and affectionate glow spread over her calm and majestic features ; but lately, either from illness or some secret cause, she was very seldom seen.

When I entered the cottage, the servant seemed as stately as the mistress.—“ Do not, my own dear grand-mamma, be angry with me for asking our kind friend to come and see you. See, mamma, she has climbed the mountain—she is so good ; and do,—oh, do tell her—”

“ My dear Isabel,” said the courtly lady, “ I am proud of the honour done me ; and I hope I shall always be able to receive your kind friend as she deserves ; though this poor cottage is not—” the colour flushed her pale cheek, and she burst into an unconstrained flood of tears. Isabel looked at her venerable parent with an indescribable expression, and, dropping on her knees, besought her to be calm, and repeatedly assured her, that she did not mean to offend, by bringing me there. “ Offend ! no, my child ; but,” she added, turning to me, “ there are times, there are circumstances, which, particularly during illness, oblige us to feel the presence of our dearest friends a—pray be seated, madam, and forgive an old woman, who is unable either to command or to express her feelings—”

I lamented her illness, and pressed my services as long

and as earnestly as I could ; but she declined my advances, and my drooping Daisy saw me depart without being of the slightest use to her venerable parent. The next evening, the stiff Italian came to me, and for the first time spoke something like English. I quickly understood that Madame de Mondalberto was much worse, and wished to see me. I found her very ill, but supported in an old oak chair by pillows, an dear Daisy sitting on a little stool at her feet ; a large silver rosary lay on the table, and a Latin breviary was open on her lap. I had taken some fine grapes, and some cordials in my little basket, and my favourite's eyes sparkled brightly, when I presented my offering.

"I have sent for you, madam," she said, "that I may have an opportunity of conquering my foolish pride, which now ill becomes me, and at the same time of proving that I value and respect you."

The lady thought she was dying ; and she was anxious to inform me who my beloved Daisy was, that if it pleased God to call her, the mountain girl might have one friend, in what her parent knew was a cold, a very cold world.

Madame de Mondalberto, a widow before most women are wives, was a native of Florence. She had one son, who, at a very early period of life, went to the East, with the hope of amassing wealth sufficient to retrieve the honours of a falling house. He there married a young and beautiful Hindoo girl, which created so

much enmity towards him on the part of his rich and powerful relations, that they soon ceased all communication with him,—all but his mother, to whom he subsequently consigned his first-born child, and who, in consequence of her receiving “the little pagan,” as they called the infant traveller, under her protection, became so much persecuted, especially by her brother, who was abbot of Il Santo Pietro, that she resolved to visit England, where indeed she had before resided ; and there, with one faithful attendant, she was supported by the money received for the maintenance and education of Isabel. Her health was very much impaired, and she preferred the calm retirement of Goat Nest, where she had leisure to impart to her beloved child the information she herself had acquired in her long intercourse with the world.

More than a year had elapsed without Madame de Mondalberto’s hearing from India, and her heart fainted within her when she thought of the possibility of her dear son’s death ;—forgetful of his mother and child she knew he could never be. But absolute want awaited her ; and, for many weeks she had been supported by the goat’s milk, and the wild fruit and vegetables that her grandchild’s affection procured from the mountains, in the dark twilight or early morning. “She could not work, to beg she was ashamed ;” and she would have perished for want of proper nutriment had not her anxiety for Isabel conquered her other

feelings, and obliged her to confess her real situation. By God's blessing, with proper care she seemed gradually recovering ; and, were it not for the wearing and wasting anxiety of her spirit, her body would have regained its usual strength. The first effort she made, when she got a little better, was to reach the summit of West Crag, a spot that overlooked the high road, and sit and watch the distant postman wending his solitary way round the side of the mountain into the glade ; but though no letter arrived, each succeeding day found the old lady at the same spot ; and she was rendered miserable also from the fear that she should not live to repay the money she had borrowed, for on no other terms would she accept assistance.

One fine evening, on the West Crag, I had been reading to her St. Paul's beautiful definition of charity. Daisy had been listening attentively, and was just then busily employed in adorning the pet kid with her favourite flowers, when her attention was attracted by a splendid carriage, with outriders and gay liveries, rolling beneath us, and at length stopping at the only inn in the village. Really my heroine had less curiosity than most of her sex, for she never cared who or what anybody was ; but this equipage was so very grand, so superior even to the county members at the time of the grand election, that the stiff Italian extended her neck to ascertain which road the carriage would next take. But our astonishment increased when we saw the

horses taken off, and we occupied full ten minutes in conning the who and where-all of the matter.

Madame returned to her cottage, but Daisy would accompany me on my way home.

"Come down by the stream, pray do," said the dear girl, "and you need not wet your feet."

"It is too far about, love; and see, the grey evening is closing."

"Oh, never mind, I will take you beyond 'The Rest,' and you know I can run up the rocks like a kidling."

On we went, and had just reached "The Rest," when a rustling in the brushwood attracted our attention.

"Holloa! who's there?" said my little friend, with her usual intrepidity.

The trees divided, and a gentleman in a rich travelling dress inquired the path to the Goat's Nest.

"O sir, you do, you do, I am sure, know something of my dear papa; oh, do, oh, do tell me!" and the child clung almost convulsively to the stranger's cloak.

"You are—"

"Isabel de Mondalberto," I exclaimed—and in another instant my Daisy was folded in her father's arms.

We managed to prepare our aged friend in some degree for the reception of her son. The signor easily accounted for the delay which had occurred. His uncle, the abbot, at his death, felt and acknowledged the injustice he had done his nephew, and contrived to

leave him much of the wealth he had accumulated. The signor wrote, and sent an increased remittance to his parent, before the usual time, mentioning that he was leaving the East to take possession of the property bequeathed him in his native land, but the letter never reached its destination. His beloved wife—his dear Zara—for whom he had suffered loss of family and fortune so many years, died on the passage, and our poor Isabel had no mother. The wide waters closed over the being whom her child, in a distant country, had so fondly loved.

Our favourite's fortune had now been indeed changed ; but, though happy to see her almost unknown parent, Daisy had many mortifications to encounter. The signor was a proud, and somewhat austere man, and had lived too long in India not to have imbibed much of the indolent and haughty character of the residents of that gorgeous country, which at first made one fear that he had but little of the milk of human kindness in his bosom. He delighted in seeing his child's black clustering curls, which till then had known no other confinement than a wreath of hedge-roses, banded with pearls ; and her feet, which, to own the truth, were somewhat more expanded than nature intended, were crammed into tight French shoes, with embroidered sandals ; that was a trial, but the saddest of all was her being forced to quit Goat Nest, and accompany her father and grandmother to Paris. Only fancy my dear

Mountain Daisy transplanted with all the purity of innocence and virtue fresh about her, to that hot-bed of thoughtlessness and folly ! however, so it was. We all urged how dangerous it would be to remove her from the mountain breezes to a crowded metropolis, but our remonstrances were in vain ; and the only consolation left us was, permission to put old Lucy Green into the cottage to take care of it, and to leave her goats under my charge. Bitter tears were shed at parting ; and the count himself promised very faithfully that he would soon bring back our sweet flower if she continued to wish it. His liberality to our villagers was unbounded ; and, indeed, there were cases in which it did no good, for some of the young dames bought silk gowns, which the old people all said was not becoming their station. I heard often from our beloved girl ; and perceived that though her mind and heart remained uncontaminated, her health suffered from confinement and constant application. Madame de M. also, like my friend Miss Mitford's Mademoiselle Therese (who, by the way, steals, I suspect, almost as many hearts as Miss Mitford herself,) found Paris a better place to talk about, than to live in ; and at last our friends returned to Devon Glade. I met my sweet child at the coach door ; and, when she threw her pale brown arms around my neck, and pressed her cold lips to my cheek, I knew and felt that Isabel had suffered much illness.

"I shall soon be better, my dear friend ; I shall soon be quite well."

The goats heard her soft voice, and came scampering towards her ; and her dear grandmamma was pleased to see those affectionate animals caress her favourite. The village was in an uproar ! such bonfires—such bell ringing—there was nothing done for a week. And to crown the matter, Prospect Hill was to be sold. The very thing for all parties. Grand and majestic enough for the signor and his mother : and quite as romantic as my Mountain Daisy could wish.

Her goats are permitted to wander from the park to their usual haunts ; and their mistress looks so fresh and beautiful after her mountain excursions, that I positively detected her father in the very act of untwisting some crimson silk, and helping her to tie a garland of wild flowers around the neck of the great-grand-kid of her old favourite goat, while his eye rested with an expression of love and admiration on the noble face of his daughter. He confessed, also, the other day, that notwithstanding its murky skies, its uncertain seasons, and the somewhat sulky disposition of its inhabitants, England is as *comfortable* a country as he could live in ; particularly when brightened by the smiling looks of his MOUNTAIN DAISY.



VII.

The Anxious Wife.

WHY looks the mother so lonely at her cottage-gate—the gate of her own modest home—even at the very moment when her first-born's prayers ascend to the Almighty's throne, and her infant sleeps calmly in his cradled rest? It is a kindly and a quiet evening; the setting sun mingles his rays with the light fleecy clouds that sail along the sky; the gentle breeze wafts the fragrance of a thousand flowers through the open casement; and the voice of Nature is calling upon every heart to be cheerful and to be happy;—yet is the mother more than pensive as she looks forth along the village street; and in her countenance there are signs that she waits the home-coming of one, in whose presence alone her eye can brighten, and sadness and solitude be felt no more. For hours has she listened to hear his step along the dusty road that leads by the old inn, and through the sea-side village, to her own lowly dwelling; and now her heart is weary with the heaviness of hope deferred.

At length her ear catches the welcome and well-known sound of his tread; in another moment he is

at the gate, and soon the pair are within their quiet home. He fondly kisses his wife's fair forehead, he pats her cheek, and gazes intently on his babe;—but he has spoken no word ; and there is a cloud upon his brow ; his eyes appear sunk, and his lips are firmly compressed, as if he broods over some plan of more than ordinary moment, as he takes his accustomed seat by the cheerful fireside and partakes of food slowly and in silence ; looking now and then towards the clock, that, with its melancholy note, alone breaks the dreariness of the scene, giving awful notice that another moment is gone with the past. The wife is sitting opposite the husband ; her clasped hands rest on her knees ; and she is earnestly watching the outward signs of the struggle she knows to be passing within the breast of her beloved ; but she does not intrude her speech upon his thoughts, until with a deep and heavy sigh, he takes her small hand, gently presses it, and gazes fixedly and anxiously upon her quivering lip.

“Is there any trouble that I may not share ?” she inquired, in that gentle tone which comes to a wounded spirit like the summer breeze over a sick man's brow, when for the first time he has left the heavy atmosphere of his chamber—“or am I less the friend than the wife ?”

“Nothing, nothing, Ellen,” he replied, at length, “but that my spirits are low—and yet in truth I know not why,” he continued, assuming a look and attitude of gaiety and carelessness, “for my labour of to-night is



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Waiting for His Coming

not a new thing with me, but one which I have often done in safety and with success. The *Bessy* is expected in to-night," he added in a whisper ; " we have certain news that she will land her cargo when the moon goes down,—but strange does it seem that what should make me joyous weighs down my heart as if its veins were filled with molten lead !"

" Then go not to-night, Herbert,—Oh, go not with these fearful and reckless men,—pursue no longer a course that may lead to death ; but listen again to the warning you have so often heard from my lips."

" Nay, Ellen, soon will thy daily prayer be answered—but to-night *must* see me on the shore ; I am pledged to be there before the midnight comes ; but take the word of one who never deceived you, the morrow's dawn shall see me an altered man—never again shall the smuggler hail me his companion. And now, farewell,—this will be my *last* night." Herbert kissed his sleeping babe, breathed a parting prayer over the couch of his boy, pressed his wife to his bosom, and paced rapidly from his dwelling.

She watched him, until he had reached the jutting of the road that led down to the beach. Then, sighing heavily, she echoed her husband's words " his last night !" and, leaning her head upon the cradle of her child, wept bitterly, as she prayed earnestly that his farewell sentence might not have an awful meaning.

Herbert hurried onwards, nor paused even for a mo-

ment, until he stood before a large mansion that nearly skirted the beach ; its broken windows and unweeded garden showed it to be without inhabitant. It had once been his own—it had descended to him through a long line of ancestors ; and a very few years had passed since he had been greeted as one of the wealthiest men along the whole coast of Devonshire. One of the happiest he had certainly been ; for his hopes of the future soared but little beyond the possessions of the present ; his pleasures were those of a domestic hearth, and all his ambition sought for was even within his grasp.

But it is not the daring and the speculative alone that adversity visits :—in an evil hour, but more from a natural kindliness of disposition than from feelings of a selfish nature, was Herbert induced to permit a quantity of smuggled goods to remain in one of his cellars until their owners had contrived some means of conveying them to the neighbouring town of Barnstaple. These were discovered by the officers of Excise ; the unfortunate gentleman was prosecuted, exchequered in an enormous sum, and utterly, and, as it appeared, irretrievably ruined. The lofty mansion in the dale was exchanged for the humble cottage on the moor ; but as a recompense for poverty and loss of character, he had then a conscience void of offence, and the knowledge that in adversity and in prosperity his wife was still the same ;—there was hope in every tone of her sweet gentle voice, in every glance of her mild blue eye—the smile

of affection was never for a moment away from her eloquent countenance ; and the dwelling he had shuddered to think upon, became happier and more cheerful than the abode from which he had been driven—an exile within sight of home.

But, partly from necessity, and partly because he conceived himself a wronged and injured man, he was induced to form a connection with one of the lawless bands that infested the sea coast of Devonshire ; and, from a suspected smuggler, became one in reality. Notwithstanding the continued exertions of his wife to wean him from a course of crime and danger, he had persevered, until much of the wealth he had lost had returned again to his coffers,—and when he spoke of the re-purchase of his ancient home and estate, it was not as a far-off prospect, but as an event almost within his reach. It was this feeling, and this hope, that came over him, as he stood before the broken door of the deserted house.

“ Soon shall ye be my own,” he exclaimed, as he paused at the threshold,—“ my own, once more ; and in your spacious halls shall my Ellen sit as meekly and as gently as in her humble cottage on the moor—soon will ye be my own again, home of my fathers ! ”

He whistled ; the sound was answered ; and, in a few moments, he was in the midst of a band of resolute and daring men who welcomed him as their leader.

“ Comrades ! the moon wanes ; have you any one on the look out ? ”

"Ay, sir, ay," replied a stout, hardy seaman, "Jack Minns is up aloft with the night glass ; and I warrant me, Jack will see her ten knots off."

"Is there any one upon the watch on the main road, and to the left of the hill ?"

"Ay, sir, ay, all is cared for, and I warrant me the bonny *Bess* will land her cargo safe enough, long before the morning breaks."

The gang were carousing merrily ; but Herbert sat apart. His thoughts were with his lone wife in her cottage ; well he knew that the night would be to her sleepless as to him ; and it was with an aching heart and a burning brow that he looked upon the calm heavens, and then towards the moor that lay shrouded in darkness, and breathed a low and solemn prayer that the innocent might not suffer with the guilty. It was a vain and foolish prayer ; it was a solemn mockery of justice ; and he knew it. The husband and the father should have remembered that in his dishonour was his children's shame ; that in his misery they must participate ; and that the consequences of his crime could not be visited alone on him. It *was* thus he reasoned when such reasoning could avail him nought.

In about an hour, Jack Minns descended from the roof of the house, and gave notice that the *Bessy* was in the offing. Instantly the party were in motion, and on their way to the shore. Silently and steadily they passed down the rugged and broken cliffs, and stood at

the water's edge. Soon a solitary spark was seen dimly burning, for an instant, upon the surface of the ocean ; so faint was it, that by those only who looked for it, could it be discerned. It pointed out where the vessel lay. The signal was answered from the shore : a flash from a pistol pan informed the smugglers where they might land—and, in a few moments, the muffled oars were rapidly bearing a boat to land. A brief greeting was exchanged between the seamen and their associates, and the work of unloading commenced. In a space of time almost incredibly short, she was on her way towards the ship, when a sound that resembled a stifled scream, passed along the waves ; and the boatmen stayed their oars, first looking along the sea where their own vessel rode tranquilly upon the waters, and then towards the land, where they could discern, in the dim twilight, an unusual and ominous bustle among the party they had left.

It was not the ordinary stir of their employment that engaged the smugglers on shore. Herbert had given his directions ; and along the craggy cliffs were the tubs and bales borne to a place of safety, when he perceived a stranger among the group, and instantly pointed him out to Minns, who advanced, laid his hand upon him, and attempted to force his slouched hat from his head. The attempt was resisted, when the smuggler drew a pistol from his belt, and said in a low tone—" Friend or foe ? "

The stranger replied by knocking the pistol out of the hand that threatened him, and rushed up the cliffs followed by a number of the party, one of whom fired his pistol at the spy. The sound echoed from rock to rock, and as it died away, the voice of Jack Minns was heard in a kind of hissing whisper that passed through the group,—“Comrades, we are betrayed !—off ! off !”

But ere they could resolve on what course to pursue, a party of soldiers bent their bodies over the precipice, and pointed their muskets at the gang beneath. The click of their fire-arms was distinctly heard, and the gleam of their brightness met the gaze of the smugglers as they looked upwards and shuddered. The next sounds were the fearful warning, “Yield, in the king’s name !” and the reply of some daring and reckless man, “Come and take us !”

The smugglers had shrunk under the partial shelter of the overhanging cliffs, but as they looked to the right or left, they saw that every pass was guarded. They had brief time for thought :—the soldiers with their fixed bayonets were marching in order towards the strand, and a signal-fire was instantly blazing on the heights.

“They are but few now,” exclaimed Minns, “let us fight it out before the rest come on us.”

Herbert made no reply. Every nerve was paralyzed ; his countenance became pale as death ; and a deep and

hollow groan came from his bosom, at the very moment when Minns, struggling with the foremost soldier of the band, received the contents of a musket through his heart, and with a loud shriek fell along the shore.

The contest was brief, but did not terminate until more than one soldier had been wounded, and several smugglers had been stretched upon the crimsoned sand. Almost broken in heart, and wounded—for he had fought like a tiger in his lair, when he found the hunters press hardly upon him—was Herbert led, a gyved prisoner, along the road towards the dwelling that was once his own.

The morning was breaking over the earth, and still as a prisoner, with a felon's death before him, lay Herbert, beside his own once cheerful and happy hearth, when a gentle tap was heard at the casement ;—with a faltering step he approached, looked beneath, and beheld his wife :—she made a sign to be cautious ; and having first ascertained that his guards were sleeping, Herbert carefully opened the window, and in another moment she was in his arms :—a few brief whispers served to tell the purport of her visit :—

“ O Herbert, this is no time for reproach—to save the erring father of my children am I here. Oh, if my warning voice had been heard ere the fatal night that is now fearfully passing.”

Her object was soon explained ; and in a few seconds Herbert had taken her cloak, wrapt her in his long and

heavy coat, placed his hat on her head, pressed her to his bosom, and was crawling away under the shadow of the trees. In the already dawning twilight, he could perceive her at the window, pressing her hand to her brow, and her raised finger was directing his course towards the beach.

The whole transaction was scarcely the work of a minute, but it was an eventful one ; for she had scarcely closed the window ere one of the soldiers awoke, turned and looked carefully round the room—the prisoner was seated in a corner, leaning her head upon her arm ; and above an hour passed before the escape of Herbert was discovered.

In vain did they search every portion of the old mansion, and scour the neighbouring hills and plains—the object they sought was nowhere to be found ;—and although Ellen was led to the nearest town and examined, her bondage was brief,—she was suffered to return to her children.

Nearly a year had passed, and she had received no tidings of her husband,—hope had at length gone from her, in sorrow and in solitude did she spend her days, and even the sweet smiles and gentle accents of her children failed to call back comfort to her heart and dwelling. A long weary winter and a cheerful spring had gone by ; and summer had again decked the land in beauty. Driven from her humble cottage, and pointed at as the smuggler's wife, in the neighbouring town of

Barnstaple, in which she at first sought refuge, she had travelled along the coast,—poor, and friendless, and deserted,—with no comforter but that religion which had never left her, either in the lofty dwelling on the strand, the humble cottage on the moor, or during her wanderings along the public highways,—depending for existence upon the poor pittance that the cold hand of charity might fling to her. At length in a dark and cheerless lodging in the outskirts of Ilfracombe did Ellen Herbert find shelter, and by the labour of her hands, did she bring up those who were more desolate than orphans.

Morning, noon, and night, did she fervently pray that wherever her husband wandered, the light of truth might visit him, and that deep adversity might teach him the lesson of honourable contentment he had failed to learn from the precepts and example of his wife.

One evening when her children were at rest, she had laid aside her work, and the Book of Truth lay open on her table ; she had been comforted by its pages, that speak so strongly to the faithful of reward ; to the desolate, of hope ; when the latch was gently raised, and Herbert met the gaze of his wife !—pale and haggard, and in the garb of extreme poverty did he stand before her, and listen to the throbs that came from her bosom, mingled with grateful thanks to the Giver of all good that he was yet alive.

Her prayers had been heard. The hand of affliction

had been heavy upon him in the far distant land to which he had escaped ; but affliction had been to him mercy ; the bread that had been cast upon the waters, had been returned after many days ; the prayers of the righteous had availed much ;—changed in heart did he once more tread the shores of his native land, and seek out those beloved ones from whom he might again hear the blessed words of husband and father.

All the night long did they sit, hand in hand, and speak their gratitude to God, who had made adversity the handmaid of religion : and in calm confidence they spake of the future, as more full of hope than of fear. “Steadfastly purposing to lead a new life,” did the outlawed smuggler detail to his trusting and virtuous companion the trials he had encountered—trials that had worked together for his good. And the early morning beheld them, with their boy and babe, journeying from the town.

In the metropolis, to which they travelled, Herbert, under another name, soon obtained employment ; regained his lost character ; and by a course of unremitting industry and integrity, arrived, step by step, to a respectable and lucrative station in the office of an extensive merchant, whose partner he became, after the lapse of a few years.

Many persons are there, in the county of Devon, who have received from their fathers the above story of Her-

bert the smuggler. The circumstances will be familiar to some of them, although nearly a century has passed over the transaction ; for it has been recorded as nearly as possible, after the manner in which it was related to the writer, as *a true tale*.





VIII.

“ We’ll see about it.”

“ **W**E’LL see about it !” From that simple sentence has arisen more evil to Ireland than any person, ignorant of the strange union of Impetuosity and Procrastination my countrymen exhibit, could well believe. They are sufficiently prompt and energetic where their feelings are concerned, but, in matters of business, they almost invariably prefer *seeing about* to **DOING**.

I shall not find it difficult to illustrate this observation. From the many examples of its truth, in high and in low life, I select Philip Garraty.

Philip, and Philip’s wife, and Philip’s children, and all of the house of Garraty, are employed from morning till night in *seeing about* everything, and, consequently, in *doing* nothing. There is Philip—a tall, handsome, good-humoured fellow, of about five-and-thirty, with broad, lazy-looking shoulders, and a smile perpetually lurking about his mouth, or in his bright hazel eyes—the picture of indolence and kindly feeling. There he is, leaning over what was once a five-barred gate, and leads to the haggart ; his blue worsted stockings full of

holes, which the suggan, twisted half way up the well-formed leg, fails to conceal ; while his brogues (to use his own words) if they do let the water in, let it out again. With what unstudied elegance does he roll that knotted twine and then unroll it ; varying his occupation, at times, by kicking the stones that once formed a wall, into the stagnant pool, scarcely large enough for full-grown ducks to sail in !

But let us first take a survey of the premises.

The dwelling-house is a long rambling abode, much larger than the generality of those that fall to the lot of small Irish farmers ; but the fact is that Philip rents one of the most extensive farms in the neighbourhood, and ought to be “ well to do in the world.” The dwelling looks very comfortless, notwithstanding : part of the thatch is much decayed, and the rank weeds and damp moss nearly cover it ; the door posts are only united to the wall by a few scattered portions of clay and stone, and the door itself is hanging but by one hinge ; the window frames shake in the passing wind, and some of the compartments are stuffed with the crown of a hat, or a “ lock of straw ”—very unsightly objects. At the opposite side of the swamp is the haggart gate, where a broken line of alternate palings and wall exhibit proof that it had been formerly fenced in ; the commodious barn is almost roofless, and the other sheds pretty much in the same condition ; the pig-stye is deserted by the grubbing lady and her grunting progeny, who are too

fond of an occasional repast in the once cultivated garden to remain in their proper abode ; the listless turkeys and contented, half-fatted geese, live at large and on the public ; but the turkeys, with all their shyness and modesty, have the best of it—for they mount the ill-built stacks, and select the grain *à plaisir*.

“Give you good morrow, Mr. Philip ; we have had showery weather lately.”

“Och, all manner o’ joy to ye, my lady, and sure ye’ll walk in, and sit down ; my woman will be proud to see ye. I’m sartin we’ll have the rain soon again, for it’s everywhere, like bad luck ; and my throat’s sore wid hurishing thim pigs out o’ the garden—sorra a thing can I do all day for watching thim.”

“Why do you not mend the door of the stye ?”

“True for ye, ma’am dear, so I would—if I had the nails, and I’ve been threat’ning to step down to Mickey Bow, the smith, to ask him to *see about it*.”

“I hear you’ve had a fine crop of wheat, Philip.”

“Thank God for all things ! You may say that ; we had, my lady, a fine crop—but I have always the hight of ill luck somehow, for the turkeys have had the most of it ; but I mean to *see about* setting it up safe to-morrow.”

“But, Philip, I thought you sold the wheat, standing, to the steward at the big house.”

“It was all as one as sould, only it’s a bad world, madam dear, and I’ve no luck. Says the steward to me,

says he, I like to do things like a man of business, so, Mister Garraty, just draw up a bit of an agreement that you deliver over the wheat field to me, on sich a day, standing as it is, for sich a sum, and I'll sign it for ye, and thin there can be no mistake, only let me have it by this day week. Well, to be sure I came home full o' my good luck, and I tould the wife; and on the strength of it she must have a new gown. And sure, says she, Miss Hennessy is just come from Dublin, wid a shop full o' goods, and on account that she's my brother's sister-in-law's first cousin, she'll let me have the first sight o' the things, and I can take my pick—and ye'll have plinty of time to *see about* the agreement to-morrow. Well, I don't know how it was, but the next day we had no paper, nor ink, nor pens in the house; I meant to send the gosson to Miss Hennessy's for all—but forgot the pens. So when I was *seeing about* the 'greement, I bethought of the ould gander, and while I was pulling as beautiful a pen as ever ye laid yer two eyes upon, out of his wing, he tattered my hand with his bill in sich a manner, that sorra a pen I could hould for three days. Well, one thing or another put it off for ever so long, and at last I wrote it out like print, and takes it myself to the steward. Good evening to you, Mr. Garraty, says he. Good evening kindly, sir, says I, and I hope the woman that owns ye, and all yer good family's well. All well, thank ye, Mr. Garraty, says he. I've got the 'greement here, sir,

says I, pulling it out as I thought ; but behould ye—I only cotcht the paper it was wrapt in, to keep it from the dirt of the tobacco that was loose in my pocket for want of a box—(saving yer presence) ; so I turned what little bits o’ things I had in it out, and there was a great hole that ye might drive all the parish rats through, at the bottom—which the wife promised to *see about* mending, as good as six months before. Well, I saw the sneer on his ugly mouth (for he’s an Englishman), and I turned it off with a laugh, and said air holes were comfortable in hot weather, and sich like jokes—and that I’d go home and make another ’greement. ’Greement for what ? says he, laying down his great outlandish pipe. Whew ! may be ye don’t know, says I. Not I, says he. The wheat field, says I. Why, says he, didn’t I tell you then, that you must bring the ’greement to me by that day week ;—and that was by the same token (pulling a red memorandum-book out of his pocket), let me see—exactly this day three weeks. Do you think, Mister Garraty, he goes on, that when ye didn’t care to look after yer own interests, and I offering so fair for the field, I was going to wait upon you ? I don’t lose my papers in the Irish fashion. Well, that last set me up—and so I axed him if it was the pattern of his English breeding ; and one word brought on another, and all the blood in my body rushed into my fist—and I had the ill luck to knock him down—and, the coward, what does he do, but takes the law o’ me

—and I was cast—and lost the sale of the wheat—and was ordered to pay ever so much money : well, I didn't care to pay it then, but gave an engagement ; and I meant to *see about it*—but forgot, and all in a giffy, came a thing they call an execution—and to stop the cant, I was forced to borrow money from that tame negur, the exciseman, who'd sell the sowl out of his grandmother for sixpence (if indeed there ever was a sowl in the family), and it's a terrible case to be paying *interest* for it *still*."

"But Philip, you might give up or dispose of part of your farm. I know you could get a good sum of money for that rich meadow by the river."

"True for ye, ma'am, dear—and I've been *seeing about it* for a long time—but somehow *I have no luck*. Jist as ye came up, I was thinking to myself, that the gale day is past, and all one as before, yara a pin's worth have I for the rint, and the landlord wants it as bad as I do, though it's a shame to say that of a gintleman ; for just as he was *seeing about* some ould custodium, or something of the sort, that had been hanging over the estate ever since he came to it, the sheriff's officers put *executioners* in the house, and it's very sorrowful for both of us, if I may make bould to say so ; for I am sartin he'll be racking me for the money—and indeed the ould huntsman tould me as much—but I must *see about it* : not indeed that it's much good—for I've no luck."

"Let me beg of you, Philip, not to take such an idea

into your head ; do *not lose* a moment : you will be utterly ruined if you do ; why not apply to your father-in-law—he is able to assist you ; for at present you only suffer from temporary embarrassment."

"True for ye—that's good advice, my lady ; and by the blessing of God I'll *see about it*."

"Then go directly, Philip."

"Directly—I can't, ma'am, dear—on account of the pigs ; and sorra a one I have but myself to keep them out of the cabbages ; for I let the woman and the grawls go to the pattern at Killaun ; it's little pleasure they see, the cratur's."

"But your wife did not hear the huntsman's story ?"

"Och, ay did she—but unless she could give me a sheaf o' bank notes, where would be the good of her staying—but I'll *see about it*."

"Immediately then, Philip : think upon the ruin that may come—nay, that *must* come, if you *neglect* this matter : your wife too ; your family, reduced from comfort to starvation—your home desolate—"

"Asy, my lady,—don't be after breaking my heart intirely ; thank God I have seven as fine flahulugh children as ever peeled pratee, and all under twelve years ould ; and sure I'd lay down my life tin times over for every one o' them : and to-morrow for sartin—no—to-morrow—the hurling ; I can't to-morrow ; but the day after, if I'm a living man, I'll *see about it*."

Poor Philip ! his kindly feelings were valueless be-

cause of his unfortunate habit. Would that this were the only example I could produce of the ill effects of that dangerous little sentence—"I'll see about it!" Oh that the sons and daughters of the fairest island that ever heaved its green bosom above the surface of the ocean, would arise and *be doing* what is to be done, and never again rest contented with—"SEEING ABOUT IT."





IX.

The Story of Edwin, the Exile of Deira.

EDWIN, the rightful king of Deira, had been from his childhood, a fugitive and an outcast from his throne and his country. Year after year he had wandered with the few friends that neither want nor danger could rend from him, seeking safety and protection in every British kingdom but his own. The influence of his sister's husband—the usurper of his hereditary rights—was universally felt and acknowledged ; and whoever was bold enough to afford him even a temporary shelter, found a powerful enemy in his kinsman Adelfrid, who, having dispossessed him of his crown, sought by every means to deprive him of his life.

His wanderings—for he was often a dweller in the woods and on the mountains—the hardships he had encountered ; the perpetual wanderings by which alone he preserved his life ; the warlike habits he had acquired, by the frequent skirmishes of his party with the hirelings of his enemy, as well as with the various bands of freebooters that infested the country,—had made him

careless of danger, hardy of frame, intelligent, energetic and brave ; while his occasional residence in the courts of many British monarchs, and the knowledge of his royal birth and high claims, had given to his manners a degree of refinement, and to his mind a consciousness of superiority, which at once spoke the descendant of a race of kings. His fine form, his gentle demeanour, and his misfortunes had gained him many friends ; the tyrant by whom he had been deposed, therefore, felt and knew him to be dangerous.

Alarmed at the exaggerated accounts which at times reached him, of the prowess of the young prince, and dreading the influence of his name and of his cause, Adelfrid denounced the bitterest threats of vengeance against any who protected him ; and for a long period the fugitive had only met with powerless friends, or enemies who sought, under the garb of friendship, to betray him. At length he was induced to seek an asylum at the court of Redwald, the Uffinga of East Anglia.

Into this state, Christianity had been recently introduced ; but it had to struggle with the darkness of paganism, and was strenuously opposed by the people, whose ideas of glory, and whose warlike habits were so much at variance with the mild principles which the missionaries to Britain then taught. The Uffinga, however, was so far convinced of their truth and excellence, as to foster their growth ; and, although he

set up a Christian altar in a temple dedicated to the deities of his country, and mingled prayers to the living God, with sacrifices to idols under the same roof,—even by this act he enabled his subjects to draw comparisons and to form conclusions. The light of our blessed religion was therefore, gradually, but surely, spreading over the kingdom of East Anglia.

Edwin was welcomed with sincerity by the Uffinga to the East Anglian court ; a pledge of safety was given him ; apartments were assigned him in the palace ; and the prince was happy in receiving a home from his wretched and dangerous wanderings.

By his conciliating manners, his military skill and courage, and his graceful address, he succeeded in gaining the love and esteem of the monarch and his queen, with that of the chief officers of their court. But his hopes and prospects were soon again clouded ; for, within a short time ambassadors from Deira arrived at the court of the Uffinga entreating, that as a deadly enemy to King Adelfrid sojourned and dwelt familiarly, with all his company, in the kingdom of East Anglia, he might be delivered up to the embassy or put to death. The message was accompanied by rich gifts of silver and gold, and high offers of service and amity to the Uffinga,—but they prevailed nothing, and were returned. A second time, the ambassadors appeared at the court of Redwald, and brought with them bribes still more tempting ; and again they were rejected.

After awhile, the ambassadors arrived a third time, bringing with them still higher offers of wealth,—and then they bade the East Anglian monarch decide between the gold and the sword of the powerful sovereign of Deira and Bernicia.

Edwin, gazing from the lattice of his apartment, beheld the ambassadors from his enemy enter the courtyard of his host—he lingered, in full confidence that they would be dismissed as they came. The hours passed heavily, and still the messengers continued in the audience-room of the king,—for he hesitated to return an answer which he dreaded would be his destruction, and after a contest with honour and generosity, his fears yielded ;—he knew the power and the savage nature of Adelfrid, and he retained his ambassadors until he had formed the resolution, either to deliver up or to put to death the exiled and persecuted prince.

Edwin was sitting in his chamber, sadly musing on the uncertainty of his fate, which left him so utterly at the will and mercy of others, and dreading the effect of the prolonged stay of his enemies,—when, at night-fall, a dear friend, an East Anglian earl entered and stood before him with a melancholy countenance.

“Well, Oswald,” said Edwin, “what is to be my fate ? Will your sovereign be my protector, or must I be again a houseless wanderer among the wilds, where the wolf and the deer will be my companions by night and by day ?”

years, since my kingly father died, been an outcast and a wanderer—enduring difficulties that men might shudder but to name, and dangers that sicken but to think upon?—to perish now, when life hath most promise, and death most terror! Must I go down to the dust with no other fame than that of having chased the wolf from his forest lair, and driven the eagle from her mountain nest? must I *die*?”

“Not so, prince of Deira,” said Oswald, “not so,—a noble steed is at the gate, and your trusty friends are with him,—before morning, you will be far, far from our kingdom, where the Uffinga and your vile kinsman will as vainly seek you, as when of old the blood-hounds of the tyrant sought you in wood and upon hill.”

Edwin pressed his hand to his brow, and bent his head till it touched his bosom; while from the tremulous motion of his lips, it was evident that some severe struggle was passing within. He continued in this attitude for a few moments, while his friend stood gazing upon him with anxiety and impatience, for he knew that a trivial delay might render his exertions fruitless, and seal the death-doom of the man he regarded with more than brotherly affection.

“Come, come, Edwin,” he exclaimed, “look forth towards the sky, and see how its darkness favours you,—haste, haste.”

“Edwin started from his posture of deep thought, folded his arms, advanced his right foot, which he

Oswald made no answer.

"Your looks bode ill tidings," continued Edwin, "but I have borne adversity too long to be corrupted by the sunshine that has gladdened my heart even in your happy court. Speak out, as a brave man should speak to one who is no coward."

"The king is terrified by the *threats* of the tyrant whose *bribes* he rejected with scorn."

"Then bid him farewell for me—and the blessing of the gods of his country and of mine be with him. Would he had more spirit or more strength. But bid him farewell for me."

"Nay, nay, prince," said Oswald, "listen to me. The tyrant threatens destruction on our country, till not a breathing soul be left, nor one stone above another within its boundaries—unless—unless—the Uffinga deliver you up to his rage,—or—or—destroy you himself within these very walls."

The resolute and bold countenance of Edwin changed, and its colourless expression spoke only of despair, as he faintly exclaimed, "And your king promised this?"

"To this he hath pledged himself."

Edwin seated himself on the ground, covered his face with his hands, and appeared in bitter and hopeless agony;—but still it was the agony of a *man*. After a pause of a few minutes, he raised his head, and said,—

"Is it for this, then, that I have for eighteen long

years, since my kingly father died, been an outcast and a wanderer—enduring difficulties that men might shudder but to name, and dangers that sicken but to think upon?—to perish now, when life hath most promise, and death most terror! Must I go down to the dust with no other fame than that of having chased the wolf from his forest lair, and driven the eagle from her mountain nest? must I *die*?”

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“Come, come, Edwin,” he exclaimed, “look forth towards the sky, and see how its darkness favours you,—haste, haste.”

“Edwin started from his posture of deep thought, folded his arms, advanced his right foot, which he

planted firmly on the ground, raised his head, and looked like one whose proud glance might well win a kingdom.

“No, Oswald,” he answered hastily, “I will not go—I will not fly like a craven: and if I must die, it is better that I fall by King Redwald’s mandate, than by the hand of a base serf, or the yet baser hireling of a bloody tyrant,—and where indeed should I fly,”—he continued, as his voice fell, and as he altered his position to one less bold but more thoughtful—“where should I fly now—I, who have so long wandered through this isle of Britain, herding among savage beasts, or men with more cruelty and less courage—shunned like one who brought with him a pestilence, or sheltered only till convenience could send the leper forth? Of whom shall I seek shelter, when the dread of my vile kinsman chills even the heart of your good and mighty king? No, Oswald—the blessing of a poor, homeless, wretched prince be with you. But I go not forth.”

“You will at least find protection where you have so often found it,” said Oswald, “the mountains and the forests where you have so often dwelt will be your refuge; and men are not there to slight or to betray you.”

“Oswald,” answered Edwin, “you little know what for so many years I have suffered and felt. By night and by day to be exposed to open foes, or to secret treachery,—to feel famine in its keenest sense, by see-

ing my few faithful followers endure it patiently for me,—to behold the wolves gather round the tree, in which I rested, and to dread sleep lest I might fall from its branches and be their prey—to endure the storm and the lightning, houseless—to know that my native land groaned under the sway of an oppressor, and waking or dreaming, to fancy that his dagger was at my heart. These are no common terrors ; and I shrink from again encountering them, though I shrink not from death. What, think you, was my support under them ? *Hope*, Oswald, *hope*—the companion of all my wanderings was HOPE—which I can no longer cherish. No, I will not wander hence.”

“ But think,” replied his friend, “ life is dear to all, and must be most dear to you,—who have a kingdom, the kingdom of your forefathers, to struggle for.”

“ Oswald, urge me no more—besides,”—said Edwin, as his countenance brightened, and the colour returned to his cheek,—“ the Uffinga hath my pledge that I do not leave his court,—he has been my friend, and by doubting him and breaking my promise, I should only blacken the name of one whose only crime has heretofore been his misfortune. Oswald, I go not hence.”

Still the young earl continued to press upon the prince the policy and the necessity of at once leaving the court, and trusting to flight for safety. When he saw that all his arguments were vain,—

“ Well then,” said he, “ I go to glean further intelli-

gence of the Uffinga's intentions. Alas! I know that they are fixed—sadly and shamefully fixed; but nevertheless, I go. Meet me, Prince Edwin, at midnight, near the ancient and hallowed oak, whose branches shadow the outer palace gate. There is no watch set. From that gate you will find easy passage. Well, well," he continued, as Edwin shook his head, "meet me there, whatever be your determination; and I leave you to reflect."

Oswald departed, and the unhappy prince was left alone. He paced his dreary chamber for nearly two hours, reflecting on his now almost certain fate. But his resolution remained unchanged; he was determined that no consideration should induce him to forfeit the pledge he had given to his royal host; he felt that the certainty of death was preferable to the daily and hourly anticipation of it; and he knew that if Redwald were unable or unwilling to protect him, he had no hope but that of passing a miserable existence among the woods and the wilds, surrounded on all sides by dangers which must sooner or later be his destruction. It wanted but an hour of midnight, when he wrapt his mantle round him, and went forth. The night was dark and stormy. He walked beneath the shadows of the ancient tree, whose branches spread over a vast extent of ground, and whose topmost boughs were lost in the dark clouds, and seated himself on the large stone at the base of its trunk, to wait the coming of his friend.

In the palace of his host, to which his attention was naturally drawn, all was silent as the grave ; behind him was the outer gate, unguarded by a single sentinel ; as he looked towards it, he saw, by the light of some solitary star, the extended plain, and thought that he could distinguish the sounds of familiar voices. He knew that his sworn friends were within a short distance, that escape was easy, that pursuit was impossible until he was far beyond its reach, and he was strongly tempted to fly from his doubtful friends and certain enemies ; once more to trust his safety to the forests and the mountains. The wind passing through the tree, bearing down its branches that rose again with a low moaning sound, and shaking from their leaves the heavy drops of rain ; the silence and the gloom that pervaded all around ; and, above all, the uncertainty of his fate, made a momentary dread come over him, which was increased when he recollected the various legendary tales that superstition had connected with the spot. The old tree had been consecrated by the ancient Druids, and was still considered as an object of veneration. It was believed, that around its base the departed priests were permitted to assemble and to repeat their sacrifices. And few could pass it, even in the day-light without pausing to pay some tribute of respect to those whom they imagined its guardians. Edwin was brave, and he had too often confronted danger in many forms to dread it under any ; but the

new belief that had found its way into Redwald's court, where it had to struggle with the horrors and the bitterest opposition of paganism, had left his mind in that uncertain state—that “halting between two opinions,” which made him now shudder when reflection was forced upon him. He rose and paced round the tree, glancing occasionally through the gate over the wide plain on which he knew was freedom, and endeavouring to recollect the few observations he had heard from the strangers who had brought those new doctrines into Britain.

He had been again seated for some minutes, while a variety of thoughts crowded upon him, when, suddenly raising his head, he beheld before him a strange figure, whose garb of perfect white was powerfully contrasted with the surrounding darkness. Edwin rose, shook off the rain-drops from his mantle, and unconsciously laid his hand upon his sword. But when he saw the mild and dignified attitude of his visitor, he resumed his seat, and with a mixed feeling of superstitious awe and of anger at being intruded upon at such a moment, gazed upon him in silence.

The stranger stood for a few moments, but spoke no word ; at length he said, “Wherefore, at this dark hour of the midnight, wherefore, when other men are within and in their deep sleep ; wherefore sit ye alone and sorrowful upon the stone abroad, watching ?”

“And what have you to do with me ?” asked

Edwin, "and if I pass the night within doors or without, what have you to do therewith?"

"Think not," replied the stranger, "but that I know the cause of your heaviness, and why you watch here, in this gloomy place, at this solitary hour. For I know, certainly, who you be, and why you be sad and sorrowful, and therefore know I well the danger you dread. Shall I tell him," he continued, in a low moaning voice, as if he communed with himself rather than addressed a hearer, "shall I tell him of one who was sought by his enemy in the wilderness of Engedi, and pursued among the rocks where the wild goats had their dwellings; who was sheltered by the accursed, and who begged a morsel of bread from the hireling, and from the heathen a drop of water—for he was hungered and athirst? Yet was *he* the Lord's anointed, and him the Lord raised to be king over the thousands of Israel's children;—but no, the clay must be softened before it can be moulded." Then turning again to the prince, he said, "Tell me now, exile of Deira, what reward would you give to him that should rid you of this sadness and this sorrow, and show you that no danger can come near you? Tell me what you would give to him who should persuade King Redwald that he should neither hurt you himself, nor deliver you up to your merciless enemies?"

"If you know me," said Edwin, "you know that the means of recompense are not with me; but such

reward as one who is a prince in all but wealth and lands, could give, would *I* give for so good a turn."

"'Tis well," said the stranger ; and again he paused, and looked earnestly on the countenance of the young prince, "'tis well," he repeated, "and now tell me, if beside all this, he shall warrant you that you shall be a king ; that all your enemies shall be vanquished ; and that not only so, but that you shall excel in worth and power all who have gone before you, all who have ever swayed the sceptre of any British kingdom—tell me what then—?"

"What then !" exclaimed Edwin, rising and looking boldly and joyfully into the stranger's face, "then, when I had the power, what would I not do for such a one ? Doubt not," he continued, more tranquilly, "but that at all times, and in all places, I would be ready to give him such gratitude as such a king could give."

"'Tis well," said the stranger ; and again he paused for a few moments. He spoke a third time, "But now tell me again—if, besides all this, he who now showeth you truly and unfeignedly that which surely and undoubtedly you shall hereafter be, can give you also better counsel—counsel more profitable for your soul's health and salvation than was heard by any of your parents or ancestors. Tell me, would you hearken to his wholesome sayings and obey them ?"

Edwin answered eagerly, "Surely would I listen and obey the counsel of him who should deliver me from

the straits and dangers that now surround me, and afterwards exalt me to be king over mine own country—surely would I listen to such a one, for his counsel must be good.”

“’Tis well,” said the stranger, a third time ; and again he regarded longer and with more attention the countenance of Edwin—full of animation and hope as it had now become. “’Tis well ; and when these things have happened, remember the answer I have heard and taken ; remember that your promise be fulfilled and accomplished—remember well this time, and this our talk ; and remember *this*, which shall be for a sign between us.”

So saying, he laid his right hand on the head of the young prince.

When Edwin raised his eyes, the stranger was gone. A moment was scarcely past ; he felt as if the hand still gently pressed his brow ; yet he saw no one. He gazed anxiously around, and listened to hear some departing step ; he beheld nought but the boughs of the oak, that bent on all sides of him, and heard only the wind among its branches.

“Edwin, Prince Edwin !” It was the voice of the young earl ; and it was loud and fearless. Oswald drew near, and grasped his friend’s hands, then bent his knee, looked upwards, and exclaimed, “Now blessed be the good Being who prompted our king to virtue ; blessed be the unknown God !”

"*The unknown God !*" murmured some voice near them. The friends started, and Oswald looked terrified around ; " Surely," said he, "'twas but the echo of the decayed tree ; there is no one near us ; but let us hasten, and take counsel together within."

" Who is this *unknown God* ?" inquired Edwin ; there was no answer and he passed on.

The young earl then briefly explained to the prince, that the queen had joined with many of the nobles, in effectually reasoning with the king against the infamy of delivering up their royal guest to certain destruction, that the Uffinga had resolved to preserve his honour, and to despise equally the gold and the threats of Adelfrid, whose ambassadors had received their final answer, and were to leave the palace of Redwald at day-break.

Edwin and his friend sat together in the prince's chamber, until the grey twilight had passed from the face of earth ; and the morning had risen calmly and beautifully after the last day's storm. They regarded the change in nature as a type of the wanderer's destiny, and while they spoke of the gloom that was gone, it was in happy anticipation of the sunshine that was approaching. The trampling of horses beneath the outer wall, soon announced the departure of the Northumbrian ambassadors from the East Anglian court, and the friends retired to rest.

When Edwin rose from refreshing slumbers and cheering dreams, he found that King Redwald and his

principal thanes were assembled in the council-room of the palace, and he soon ascertained the subject of their deliberations. The Uffinga knew that he had now no choice between war and destruction ; and the ambassador was scarcely gone when he summoned his officers together, explained to them the part he had taken, and called on them for assistance. So much loved was the exiled prince, and so deeply hated was his oppressor, that an immense army was raised to avenge the one and to punish the other, almost as soon as the messenger had arrived at the tyrant's court.

King Redwald knew that if he gave time to his enemy, the superior force and resources of the Northumbrian monarch must insure his success. He therefore instantly marched his army towards the Humber. Adelfrid advanced to meet him ; but with an army hastily collected, ill provided and discontented. A battle was fought on the east side of the river Idel, in Nottinghamshire, where a victory was obtained over the tyrant of Deira, who was killed almost at the commencement of the encounter. In this engagement Edwin held a distinguished post, and before the soldiers of his friend, as well as those of his own hereditary kingdom, conducted himself with so much courage and gallant bearing, that his oppressor had no sooner fallen than the battle terminated, and Edwin was proclaimed on the one side, and welcomed on the other, as monarch of Deira and Bernicia.

Thus, according to the prophetic words of the strange visitor who communed with him under the old oak tree, was Edwin not only saved from the malice of his deadly enemy, but given the crown of Northumberland.

For some years, Edwin governed his kingdom with justice and integrity, reclaiming his subjects from the licentious courses to which they had been accustomed ; and giving an example of virtue and uprightness to the other monarchs of the island : so that "such was the peace and tranquillite through out all Britannie, that a weake womā might have walked with her new borne babe ouer all the yland, euen from sea to sea, without anie damagee or danger." * But still Edwin was not a Christian ; he had listened to the missionaries who preached the faith of Christ, and he had reflected upon its nature ; yet, although he offered no sacrifices to his idols, he hesitated concerning the new creed, and doubted whether it were holier and more worthy of the Deity, than the service of those gods whom he worshipped after the manner of his forefathers.

After some years of peaceful and happy reign, he obtained in marriage, Edilburga, a princess of Kent ; into her family and kingdom the light of Christianity had been successfully introduced. She was accompanied to her husband's court, by Paulinus, one of the mission-

* The Venerable Bede.

aries who had been then sent to Britain. He is described by the venerable historian, as being "in personne a taule man, somewhat crooked backe, and black of heare, lene in face, and having a hooked and thin nose ; in countenance bothe dredful and reuerent ;" and his mind was active, intelligent, and upright.

One day, when Edwin was sitting alone in his chamber, and brooding over the important truths that had been pressed upon his attention, this Paulinus entered, and approached him.

He stretched forth his right hand, and laid it upon the head of the king, while he said in an impressive but gentle voice, "Does the monarch of Northumberland remember this sign ?"

The king started from his seat, as if a spirit had addressed him, and fell on his knees, while his eyes were fixed on the missionary, as if endeavouring to recognise in his strange garb and his solemn countenance and bearing, the visitor who had so mysteriously accosted him under the old oak, during his exile in the kingdom of East Anglia. While he thus gazed and trembled, the missionary pressed his hand more firmly on his brow, and repeated the question, "Does the monarch of Northumberland remember this sign ?"

"I do well remember it," replied the king in an agitated and broken voice.

"And does the king remember the pledge he gave when this sign was passed ?"

"So surely as I remember the one do I remember the other !"

"Behold then," said Paulinus, raising him from the ground, "by the bountiful hand and power of our Lord and God, have you escaped the rage of your most deadly enemy ; behold, also, by his grace and mercy have you obtained rule over your kingdom. Now, have not the promises made to you by the messenger of the Almighty, been truly and faithfully fulfilled ?"

"Most truly and faithfully," replied the king, and again he knelt and bowed his head.

"Remember now," continued the missionary, "the promise which you then gave, and let your promise also be fulfilled. And He who so delivered you, and so exalted you, shall deliver you from greater enemies and exalt you to higher honours ; even to the saving you from eternal misery, and giving you to reign with him in heaven—his eternal kingdom."

"I do remember my promise," said the king, "and now let me hear of that good and merciful Being, by whom I have been so blessed. Tell me of that God of whom I have heard so vaguely ; but of whom I have dreamt in my dreams by night, and dwelt upon in my meditations by day ; and let me be a true believer in that living God, that I and my people may be his worshippers !"

That day and the next, the king and the missionary remained closeted ; the divine book was opened ; its

hallowed words were read ; and the king no longer doubted the truths it contained. He left his chamber a Christian ; and within a short period was baptized with the principal officers of his court, and a vast concourse of his people—so vast, that the ceremony employed the rejoicing and grateful Paulinus, six and thirty days, from sun-rise until sun-set ; commencing on the Easter Sunday of the year 627, in a church hastily built of wood, in the city of York, and dedicated to the apostle St. Peter.

Such is one of the stories told of the introduction of Christianity into the Saxon kingdom of Northumberland, and of its FIRST CHRISTIAN KING.



